

ACE 66

THE HAND OF

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Twelve
Fifty
Fifty

FORTUNATELY, YOU STILL
HAVE A CHOICE! YOU ARE NOT
LIKE THESE OTHERS HERE! GO
BACK TO THE LIVING AND
MAKE AMENDS!





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Mrs. Ruth Long

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ME A
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THE LAST HIDING PLACE

WHEREVER THE FORCES OF EVIL HAVE GATHERED, FATE WAS ALSO PRESENT TO TIP THE SCALES OF FORTUNE AGAINST THOSE HUMANS WHO TRIED TO USE THE POWERS OF WICKEDNESS FOR THEIR OWN GREEDY ENDS! AND THOUGH THE HAND OF FATE HAD DIPPED INTO STRANGE PLACES, NONE WERE MORE BIZARRE THAN MADAME LIZETTE'S CARNIVAL TENT SHOW, THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HORROR...



MUSIC
ADMISSION
CHILDREN 2



LOU CAMPBELL

THE FATEFUL EVENTS BEGAN THE NIGHT THE POLICE BROKE INTO THE MIDDLE OF LIZETTE'S MACABRE PITCH...

EVERYBODY STAND JUST WHERE THEY ARE! NOBODY LEAVES THIS TENT!

HEY! WHAT IS THIS? I'M RUNNING A LEGIT SHOW! WHY THE HELL?

SORRY, LADY, BUT WE'RE LOOKING FOR TWO CROOKS WHO ROBBED THE MAIN OFFICE A HALF HOUR AGO! WE'VE GOT 'EM TRAPPED ON THE CARNY GROUNDS AND ONE OF 'EM IS WOUNDED! YOU SEEN 'EM?

AIN'T NO PLACE FOR 'EM TO HIDE HERE! MAKE YOUR SEARCH AND CLEAR OUT SO I CAN GO ON WITH THE SHOW!



NO PLACE FOR 'EM TO HIDE, EH? THOSE WAX DUMMIES ARE HOLLOW, AREN'T THEY? LOOK! BLOOD SEEPING OUT OF THAT ONE!

W-W-WHAT? WHERE?

SHOOT THE THING TO SMITHEREENS, MEN! IT IS BRETT HANNIGAN HIDING IN THERE AND HE'S A KILLER! CAN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES!

NO! STOP! YOU—YOU'RE RUINING MY EXHIBIT!

LOOK! THAT ONE'S MOVING, TOO! HANNIGAN'S PARTNER IN CRIME, NITA DELL, MUST BE IN THAT ONE! SHOOT HER DOWN OR SHE'LL KILL ONE OF US!

OH, NO!



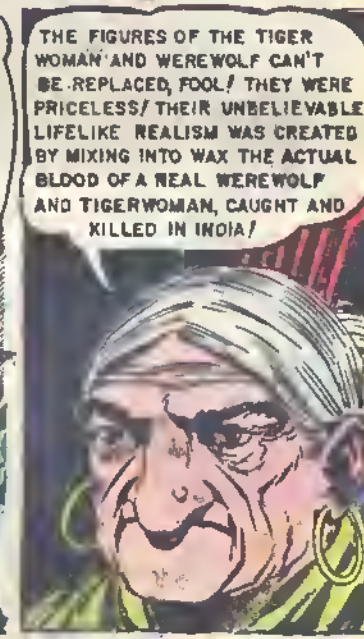
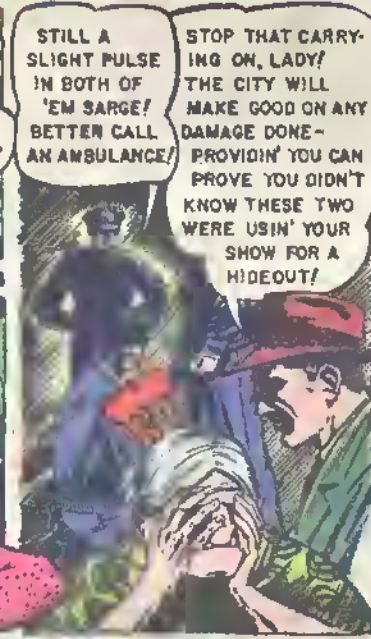
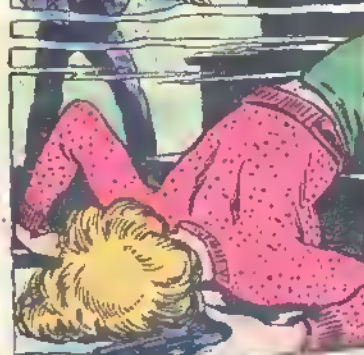
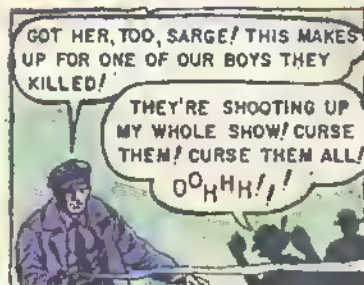
GOT HER, TOO, SARGE! THIS MAKES UP FOR ONE OF OUR BOYS THEY KILLED!

THEY'RE SHOOTING UP MY WHOLE SHOW! CURSE THEM! CURSE THEM ALL! OOH!!

STILL A SLIGHT PULSE IN BOTH OF 'EM SARGE! BETTEN CALL AN AMBULANCE!

STOP THAT CARRYING ON, LADY! THE CITY WILL MAKE GOOD ON ANY DAMAGE DONE—PROVIDIN' YOU CAN PROVE YOU DIDN'T KNOW THESE TWO WERE USIN' YOUR SHOW FOR A HIDEOUT!

THE FIGURES OF THE TIGER WOMAN AND WEREWOLF CAN'T BE REPLACED, FOOL! THEY WERE PRICELESS! THEIR UNBELIEVABLE LIFELIKE REALISM WAS CREATED BY MIXING INTO WAX THE ACTUAL BLOOD OF A REAL WEREWOLF AND TIGERWOMAN, CAUGHT AND KILLED IN INDIA!



HA HA! THAT'S A GOOD ONE! A REAL WEREWOLF AND TIGERWOMAN, EH? HO HO! THE OLD GAL REALLY BELIEVES IN SUCH THINGS!

LAUGH, YOU GOONS! GO AHEAD AND LAUGH! YOU'LL SOON SEE!





AFTER THE POLICE HAD GONE, LIZETTE RETIRED TO THE REAR OF THE TENT, WHERE...

ONE OF MY ANCESTORS WAS BURNED AS A WITCH IN ANCIENT SALEN/ HER "WITCHES HANDBOOK" HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION, BUT NONE HAVE DARED OPEN IT, NOT EVEN I... UNTIL NOW!



I WILL GET REVENGE ON THE ACCURSED POLICE FOR WRECKING MY SHOW, IF I HAVE TO CALL ON THE SERVICES OF THE DARK PRINCE HIMSELF!... AH! HERE IT IS! "INSTRUCTIONS FOR WREAKING BLACK REVENGE ON ONE'S ENEMIES!"



CLOSELY FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS, LIZETTE FOUND AN OLD CAULDRON, MIXED IN IT A WITCHES BREW...

THE BOOK SAYS THAT SOON DEMONS WILL ARISE FROM THE VAPORS AND THEY WILL KNOW ALL YOUR PROBLEMS AND GIVE YOU ALL THE ANSWERS! RISE FROM THE STEAM, OH, IMPS OF SATAN!



AND SOON...

BE NOT FRIGHTENED, LIZETTE! WE ARE HAPPY TO BE CALLED FORTH FROM THE OTHER WORLD AFTER SO LONG! LISTEN CLOSELY!



BECAUSE BLOOD OF THE ORIGINAL WERE-WOLF AND TIGERWOMAN WERE USED IN THE MOULDING OF YOUR WAX FIGURES, BOTH THOSE CREATURES LIVE IN THE NETHER WORLD OF THE UNDEAD! YOU CAN CALL THEM FORTH TO HELP YOU GET REVENGE ON THE POLICE!

SCATTER THE PIECES OF BROKEN WAX FROM THOSE FIGURES INTO THE CAULDRON AND MELT THEM THERE! THE WEREWOLF AND TIGERWOMAN WILL THEN COME TO LIFE! THEY'LL BE YOUR ALLIES!



I CAN LOSE NOTHING! I WILL TRY IT!

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

THERE! I WENT AND GOT THE PIECES OF WAX/ NOW INTO THE CAULDRON THEY GO!... HEY! THE LITTLE DEMONS ARE VANISHING!



YES! OUR WICKED WORK IS DONE!... FOR THE MOMENT!



ALMOST IMMEDIATELY THE EFFECTS OF LIZETTE'S WITCHCRAFT WERE SEEN IN THE PRISON WARD OF THE LOCAL HOSPITAL...

NITA DELL'S BED! BETTER LOOK AND-- EYAH! HEARD MOANING FROM IT-- IT'S CHANGING!



SHE'S TURNED INTO A LIVE CREATURE JUST-LIKE THE WAX FIGURE IN THE HORROR SHOW! NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE!

CAN'T IT? THERE IS EVEN ANOTHER SURPRISE IN STORE FOR YOU! LOOK BEHIND YOU!

HANNIGAN, THE OTHER CROOK! WHY, HE-HE'S CHANGED INTO A WEREWOLF, EXACTLY LIKE THE WAX STATUE IN WHICH HE WAS HIDING! BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! MUST BE A TRICK OF THE MIND!

BUT THE OFFICER SOON FOUND OUT THAT IT WAS NO ILLUSION...

STRANGLING ME!
ARRRRGGHH!

YES, FOOL MORTAL! YOU WERE ONE OF THOSE WHO TRIED TO KILL US IN OUR HUMAN FORM, REMEMBER! WE WILL TAKE OUR VENGEANCE ON ALL OF YOU!

HURRY, NITA, MY BELOVED! THAT WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING! WE MUST DO OUR WORK WELL IN PAYMENT TO THE DEMONS FOR GIVING US NEW LIFE!



LATER, AT A PUBLIC PARK NEAR THE HOSPITAL...

W-WHAT THE---? NITA DELL, ONE OF THE 'CROOKS' WE SHOT DOWN AT THE WAX MUSEUM! I THOUGHT YOU WERE---

DYING, OFFICER? HA HA! I'M SORRY BUT BOTH BRETT HANNIGAN AND I ARE VERY MUCH ALIVE, STILL!

COME BACK HERE! ALL RIGHT, YOU IGNORED MY WARNING! I'M SHOOTING TO KILL!

YOUR BULLETS ARE POWERLESS TO HURT ME THIS TIME! HEH HEH!

NICE WORK, NITA! YOU LURED HIM RIGHT INTO MY HANDS!

EEYIIII!



AS THE ILL-FATED NIGHT WORE ON, THE WEREWOLF AND TIGERWOMAN STRUCK TERROR THROUGHOUT THE CITY. BUT FATE WAS SOON TO TAKE A HAND...

WHILE, BACK AT THE CARNIVAL, LIZETTE GLOATS OVER THE TERROR-FRAUGHT NEWS...

NONE OF US IS SAFE, I TELL YOU! THESE OTHER-WORLD CREATURES ARE ATTACKING AT RANDOM LIKE WILD BEASTS! THE OFFICIALS HAVE GOT TO DO SOMETHING TO STOP 'EM!

BUT WHAT? THE POLICE ARE POWERLESS/ BULLETS HAVE NO EFFECT!

THE POLICE ARE POWERLESS, BUT PERHAPS I AM NOT! AND NOW THAT MY VENGEANCE ON THE POLICE IS COMPLETE, PERHAPS I CAN CONVERT MY WITCHING POWERS INTO CASH!

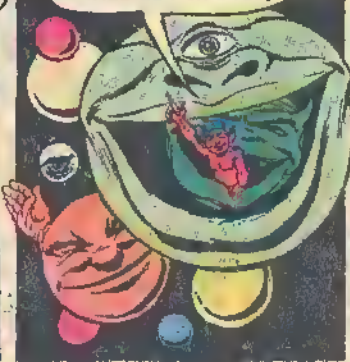


YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE STIRRED UP A NEW WITCH'S BREW, LIZETTE! IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD! YOUR EVENTUAL FATE IS ALREADY PREORDAINED!

AH! THERE ARE THE DEMONS AGAIN! HELP ME WITH MY NEW PROBLEM, PLEASE!

YOU WISH NOW TO CAPITALIZE ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WEREWOLF AND TIGERWOMAN, O POWERFUL WITCH! LISTEN CLOSELY! WE'LL SUMMON THEM HERE AND YOU'LL GET THEM EACH TO DRINK THE WITCH'S BREW. THEN THE RESULT YOU WISH WILL BE ACHIEVED!

THE DEMONS VANISHED AFTER GIVING ME THAT MESSAGE, BUT I'M SO CERTAIN THEY'LL KEEP THEIR PROMISE, I'M GOING NOW TO THE TOWN OFFICIALS TO MAKE MY DEMAND!





LIZETTE ARRIVED AT TOWN HALL WHILE AN EMERGENCY MEETING WAS IN SESSION...

GENTLEMEN, I HAVE A SOLUTION TO YOUR PROBLEM OF THE WERE-WOLF AND TIGERWOMAN MENACE!

IT'S THE WOMAN FROM THE CARNIVAL WAXWORKS SHOW!



I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW I'LL DO IT, BUT FOR TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS I'LL PRODUCE THEIR CORPSES! BUT I MUST HAVE AN AGREEMENT IN WRITING!

PREPOSTEROUS! AN-AN OUTRAGE! BUT STILL, IF SHE CAN DO IT, PERHAPS IT WOULD BE WORTH THAT PRICE!



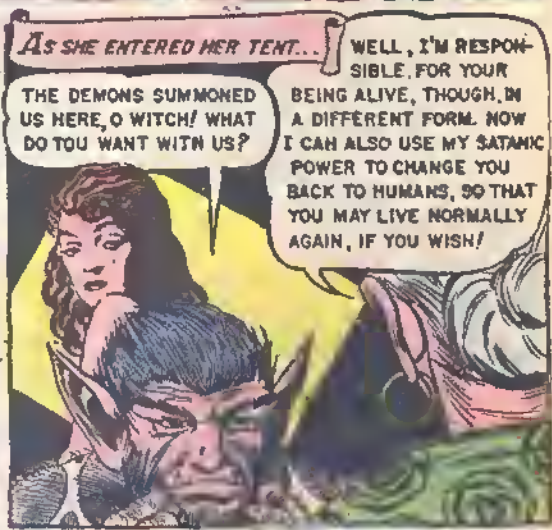
A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

IN THEIR DESPERATION THEY FINALLY HAD TO AGREE! NOW, IF THE DEMON'S INSTRUCTIONS WORK, I'LL SOON BE RICH! RICH!



AND THE TEN THOUSAND I GET FOR THIS MAY ONLY BE THE BEGINNING! THERE MUST BE OTHER WAYS I CAN MAKE MONEY OUT OF WITCHCRAFT!

PERHAPS, WICKED WOMAN, IF YOUR FATE DOESN'T CATCH UP WITH YOU TOO SOON!



AS SHE ENTERED HER TENT...

THE DEMONS SUMMONED US HERE, O WITCH! WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH US?

WELL, I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR BEING ALIVE, THOUGH, IN A DIFFERENT FORM. NOW I CAN ALSO USE MY SATANIC POWER TO CHANGE YOU BACK TO HUMANS, SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE NORMALLY AGAIN, IF YOU WISH!



WE DO! WE DO! WE'RE BOTH TIRED OF BEING HUNTED LIKE BEASTS!

VERY WELL! THE METHOD IS SIMPLE! YOU MERELY REPEAT THE WORDS I TELL YOU AND DRINK A TOAST TO EACH OTHER FROM THESE MAGIC GOBLETS!



THERE! THE GOBLETS ARE FILLED WITH THE MYSTIC WITCH'S BREW! NOW FOR THE TOAST! REPEAT IT AFTER ME, TO EACH OTHER!



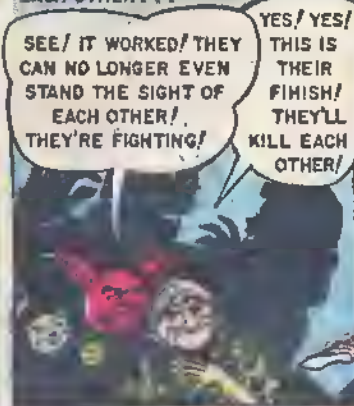
TO THE POWERS OF ANGER
AND HATE!
WE DRINK TO CHANGE
OUR FATE!



AS THE POWERFUL
DEVIL'S POTION DID ITS
WORK, THE TWO OTHER-
WORLD CREATURES
WERE SUDDENLY CON-
SUMED WITH DEMONIC HATRED FOR
EACH OTHER...

SEE! IT WORKED! THEY
CAN NO LONGER EVEN
STAND THE SIGHT OF
EACH OTHER!
THEY'RE FIGHTING!

YES! YES!
THIS IS
THEIR
FINISH!
THEY'LL
KILL EACH
OTHER!



THERE WAS A VICIOUS STRUGGLE
AND...

IT'S OVER! BOTH ARE
DEAD AT LAST! THEY'VE DESTROYED
EACH OTHER! ALL THAT'S LEFT IS
TO SUMMON THE TOWN OFFICIALS
AND COLLECT MY REWARD!



A HALF HOUR LATER...

ENTER, GENTLEMEN! MY
END OF THE CONTRACT
IS FULFILLED! INSIDE
YOU WILL FIND THE WEREWOLF
AND THE TIGERWOMAN... DEAD!

IF TRUE, IT'LL
BE WORTH
THE PRICE!



WHY, THESE ARE THE DEAD
BODIES OF NITA CELL AND BRETT
HANNIGAN! YOU'VE KILLED OUR
PRISONERS... WARD'S OF THE
CITY! THAT'LL MEAN A MURDER
CHARGE, LIZETTE!

SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG!
WITH DEATH THEY-THEY'VE
CHANGED BACK TO THEIR
HUMAN FORMS!



YOU'RE NOT GOING TO PIN ANY
MURDER CHARGE ON ME! I'M
GETTING
OUT OF--
OOOOH!

COME BACK HERE,
YOU!... WAIT! SHE'S
RUN INTO THAT CAUL-
DRON! THE FIRE'S
CAUGHT AT HER CLOTHES!



UGH! BY THE TIME WE RETURNED
WITH THE WATER IT WAS TOO LATE!
SHE BURNED TO DEATH!

YES, AND SO LIZETTE SUFFERED
THE SAME DEATH AS HER UNHOLY
ANCESTOR AT SALEM... BUT WAS
THIS JUST A COINCIDENCE, ANOTHER
ACCIDENT?... OR WAS IT FATE?



A Hand of FATE Mystery

37

THE SCIENTIFIC WORLD WAS NEVER MORE ASTOUNDED THAN BY THE EXPERIMENTS OF A YOUNG ASSISTANT TO PROFESSOR MARCUS KEELER, A BRILLIANT BOTANIST OF THE LATE 19TH CENTURY. THE WRITTEN RECORDS OF HIS FORMULAS AND EXPERIMENTS HAVE LONG BEEN DESTROYED, BUT THE WEIRD RESULTS REMAIN TO PERPLEX MEN'S MINDS. IT BEGAN IN THEIR LABORATORY ONE NIGHT, WHEN THE ASSISTANT CONFIDED HIS IDEAS TO PROFESSOR KEELER.

THIS LIQUID CAN CAUSE PLANT LIFE TO LIVE AND SURVIVE LIKE A CARNIVORE. IT WILL TURN A PLANT INTO A FLESH EATER! MY TESTS ARE NEARLY COMPLETED!

WHAT PURPOSE WILL YOU SERVE HUMANITY BY THIS DEVELOPMENT!? YOU ARE DEALING WITH CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND NATURE. YOU MUST STOP THIS MAD EXPLORATION!



SUDDENLY, AN ANGUISHED SCREAM WAKENED PROFESSOR KEELER! HE RACED TO THE LABORATORY...



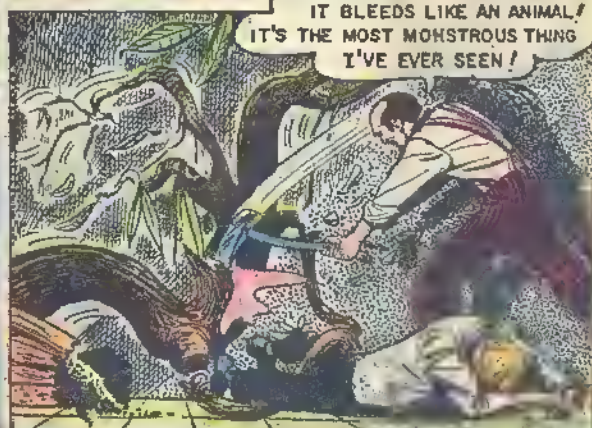
THE PLANT... IT HAS HIM IN A DEATH GRIP!

THE ASSISTANT DISREGARDED THE PROFESSOR'S ORDERS, AND WHEN KEELER RETIRED FOR THE NIGHT



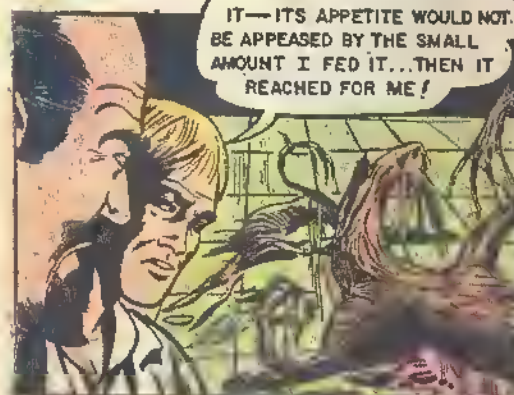
AH, MY PET, YOU HAVE GROWN HUGE SINCE LAST NIGHT! HERE IS FOOD FOR YOUR RAVENOUS APPETITE!

THE PROFESSOR SEIZED AN AXE AND HACKED AT THE MAN-EATING PLANT



IT BLEEDS LIKE AN ANIMAL! IT'S THE MOST MONSTROUS THING I'VE EVER SEEN!

THE PLANT RAPIDLY WITHERED AND DIED UNDER THE AXE



IT—ITS APPETITE WOULD NOT BE APPEASED BY THE SMALL AMOUNT I FED IT...THEN IT REACHED FOR ME!

THE ASSISTANT THEN DESTROYED ALL HIS RECORDS AND NOTES ON THE EXPERIMENT



I'VE LEARNED MY LESSON, PROFESSOR KEELER! NOW MY SCIENCE WILL BE TURNED TO BETTER THINGS!

THUS, ONE OF THE EERIEST FEATS IN THE REALM OF THE ASTOUNDING CAME TO AN END.

THE END

Rendezvous with the PHANTOM GYPSIES



SOMETIMES I WOULD HEAR THE WORKERS AT THE HOMEDALE ORPHANAGE TALKING ABOUT ME. "HE'S A WEIRD ONE, THAT EDDIE MARKOV," THEY USED TO SAY. "GOT WILD BLOOD IN 'IM—AND DARK, EVIL THINGS ON HIS MIND, GNAWING AT HIM. HE'LL NEVER BE HAPPY, NEVER BE LIKE THE OTHER KIDS HERE." IT USED TO GET ME ANGRY, TO HEAR THOSE THINGS, BECAUSE I KNEW THEY WERE RIGHT. I WAS DIFFERENT. FOR ONE THING, I SUFFERED HORRIBLE NIGHTMARES ABOUT GYPSIES AND THE STRANGE, BIZARRE WORLD IN WHICH THEY LIVED. I WAS FULL OF RESTLESSNESS AND ODD COMPULSIONS. BUT THAT ALL CHANGED—IT ALL ENDED ONE WILD AND WINDSWEEP NIGHT IN AUGUST...

I REMEMBER SUDDENLY AWAKING THAT NIGHT, SITTING BOLT UPRIGHT IN BED, AND THERE WAS A GREAT LOUD VOICE FILLING MY WHOLE HEAD, SHOUTING, "GET UP! GET DRESSED, EDDIE! LEAVE THE ORPHANAGE! THERE'S SOMEPLACE YOU HAVE TO GO. SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO DO! HURRY, EDDIE, HURRY!" AND I DIDN'T SEEM ABLE TO RESIST...

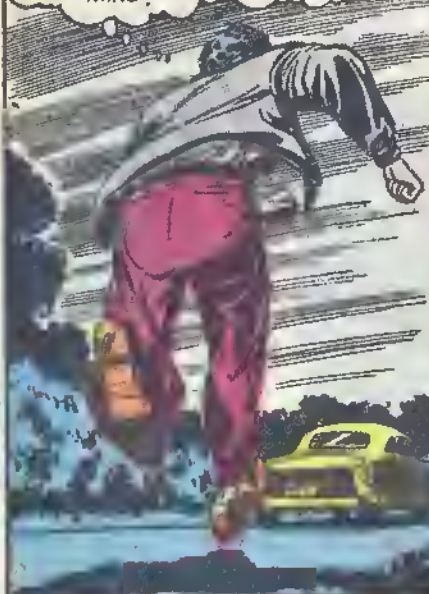
YES! ALL RIGHT! I'LL GO! I'LL GO!



I SNEAKED OUT OF THE BUILDING THE NIGHT SEEMED OMINOUSLY QUIET AND FILLED WITH SOME DREAD THING ABOUT TO HAPPEN. YET SOMETHING INSIDE OF ME KEPT DRIVING ME, MADE ME KEEP GOING...



ABOUT TWENTY CARS HAVE PASSED WITHOUT STOPPING! BETTER HURRY UP BEFORE THIS GUY CHANGES HIS MIND!



THE DRIVER INTRODUCED HIMSELF AS AL BAXTER, A TRAVELING SALESMAN. HE KEPT LOOKING AT ME STRANGELY, PUZZLED...

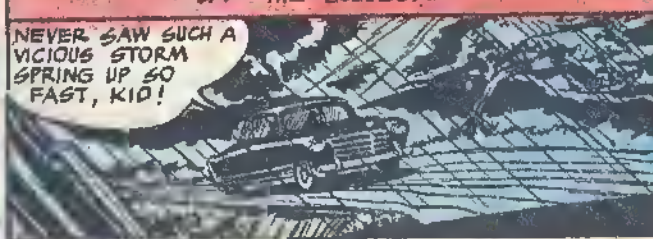
SAY, KID, I GOT A FUNNY FEELING I KNOW YOU FROM SOMEPLACE! HAVE WE EVER MET BEFORE? WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

EDDIE, SIR! I-- I DON'T REMEMBER EVER KNOWING YOU!



JUST AS AL BAXTER STARTED TO ASK ME QUESTIONS ABOUT WHERE I'D COME FROM, WHERE I WAS GOING, THE NIGHT CLOUDED UP AND A WILD ELECTRIC STORM SEEMED TO COME CRASHING OUT OF NOWHERE, TAKING HIS MIND OFF THE SUBJECT...

NEVER SAW SUCH A VICIOUS STORM SPRING UP SO FAST, KID!



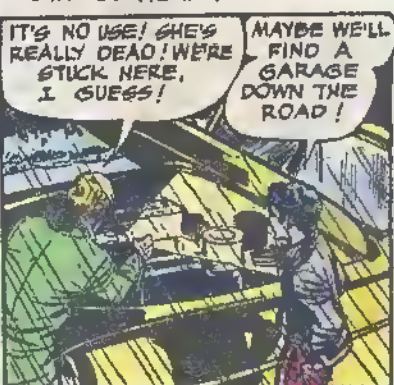
LISTEN TO THAT MOTOR SPITTING AND SPITTERING! IT WOULD BE JUST OUR LUCK FOR THIS OLD BUGGY TO BREAK DOWN MILES FROM NOWHERE IN THE MIDDLE OF A BAD STORM!



IN A FEW MINUTES, THE MOTOR CONKED OUT COLD. I GOT OUT OF THE CAR WITH AL BAXTER AND TRIED TO HELP HIM GET THE CAR STARTED AGAIN, BUT...

IT'S NO USE! SHE'S REALLY DEAD! WE'RE STUCK HERE, I GUESS!

MAYBE WE'LL FIND A GARAGE DOWN THE ROAD!



HERE, KID, STRIP THAT SOPPING JACKET OFF AND PUT ON THIS OLD PONCHO AND WE'LL TAKE A LITTLE HIKE!

THANKS, MR. BAXTER!



AS WE STARTED TO WALK THROUGH THE DOWNPOUR, FOR SOME REASON WHICH I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND, MY HEART STARTED TO POUND WITH A WILD EXCITEMENT. THEN AS WE ROUNDED A TURN...

LOOK! SOME KIND OF BIG ENCAMPMENT OVER THERE! MAYBE THEY CAN HELP US!

NOTHING LIKE TRYING!



THE RACING OF MY PULSE INCREASED AS WE DREW CLOSER AND I SAW THAT IT WAS...

... A GYPSY CAMP!

YEAH! THEY--THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO HELP US, KID! LET'S FORGET IT! LET'S--LET'S TURN AROUND AND GET OUT OF HERE!



THEN, SUDDENLY, AS THOUGH MATERIALIZING OUT OF THE RAINY DARKNESS OF THE GROVE...

WHY DON'T YOU LET THE BOY VISIT US? WE WILL NOT HARM HIM!

WHA...? WH--WHERE DID YOU GUYS COME FROM?



A BIG WEDDING IS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE! THERE WILL BE DANCING, MUSIC, GREAT FESTIVITIES! YOU WILL STAY AND...

NO! NO! I--WE--WE CAN'T! WE HAVE TO GET HELP TO FIX MY CAR!



I'M AFRAID WE MUST INSIST! IT IS ALWAYS GOOD FORTUNE TO HAVE STRANGERS DROP IN AT A WEDDING!

WE'D BETTER DO AS THEY SAY, MR. BAXTER!



FINALLY, AL BAXTER WAS FORCED TO PROCEED INTO THE CENTER OF THE CAMP. I GLANCED AT HIS FRIGHT-TWISTED FEATURES IN THE GLOW OF THE FIRES. NEVER BEFORE HAD I SEEN SUCH RAW FEAR IN A HUMAN FACE. I LISTENED TO HIM MUMBLED STRANGE, BROKEN SENTENCES, AS THOUGH TALKING TO HIMSELF...

... ACTING LIKE A FOOL! CAN'T BE SAME GYPSY TRIBE! NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF!



THE WEDDING IS BEING HELD IN THE MEETING TENT! HURRY! THE CEREMONY IS ABOUT TO START!



AS WE ENTERED THE HUGE TENT WHERE THE WEDDING WAS TO TAKE PLACE, I WITNESSED A SCENE OF REVELRY AND EXCITEMENT RIGHT OUT OF SOME OF MY WEIRDEST NIGHTMARES. IT IS HARD FOR ME TO EXPLAIN, BUT EVEN MIDST ALL THE GAIETY AND LAUGHTER, I SENSED AN AURA OF TERROR AND IMPENDING DOOM...



THEN, SUDDENLY, THE SINGING, DANCING, AND LAUGHTER CEASED. THE ATTENTION OF THE CROWD WAS DRAWN TOWARD AN OLD TRIBAL LEADER AND A YOUNG COUPLE ON A Dais AT THE FRONT OF THE TENT...



CEASE THE FESTIVITIES, MY CHILDREN! THE TIME HAS COME! WE WILL BEGIN THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY AT ONCE!

THE TWO YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE UNITED ARE BORIS MARKOV AND LIDA ROMAY, WHO...



GOOD HEAVENS! IT-- IT IS LIDA!

THE GROOM'S NAME IS MARKOV-- THE SAME AS MINE!

YOU CAN'T GO THROUGH WITH THIS! LIDA IS MY GIRL! SHE LOVES ME-- BELONGS TO ME! SHE CAN'T MARRY THAT MAN! I WON'T LET HER! LET ME GO!

SILENCE! YOU CANNOT INTERFERE NOW!

DO NOT BE AFRAID, BOY! SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, LIDA MET THIS MAN, BAXTER, WHEN HE CAME INTO HER TENT TO HAVE HIS FORTUNE TOLD! HE FELL VIOLENTLY IN LOVE WITH HER! EVEN THOUGH LIDA WAS PROMISED TO BORIS, SHE WAS YOUNG AND FOOLISH! SHE SUGGUMBED TO BAXTER'S WHIRLWIND COURTSHIP AND FLATTERY!



THEY RAN AWAY TOGETHER, BUT IN A FEW DAYS, LIDA RETURNED ALONE! SHE HAD LEARNED THAT BAXTER WAS A CRUEL, SELFISH MAN-- THAT SHE COULD NEVER LOVE HIM! SHE PUT IN HER MONTHS OF PENANCE, AND NOW SHE IS READY TO MARRY THE MAN FOR WHOM SHE WAS INTENDED!



AS THE OLD MAN FINISHED HIS STORY, I SAW AL BAXTER BREAK FREE FROM THE HANDS HOLDING HIM. HIS EYES WERE WILD WITH JEALOUS RAGE AS HE SNATCHED UP A NEEDLE-POINTED PONIARD...

LIDA IS MINE, I TELL YOU! HE WILL NOT MARRY HER! I'LL STOP HIM...

WHILE THE GAY WEDDING CROWD STOOD HORROR-STRIKEN, AL BAXTER WHIPPED THE SHINING BLADE THROUGH THE AIR TOWARD THE STAGE...



... IF I HAVE TO KILL HIM!

BORIS! LOOK OUT!

BUT THE MURDEROUS PONIARD TRAVELED TOO FAST! MY HEART SEEMED TO SWELL AND BURST WITH TERROR AND SADNESS AS I SAW THE DAGGER STRIKE ITS TARGET!



HE MURDERED THE GROOM! GET HIM! HE SHALL KNOW THE GYPSY VENGEANCE!

YOU WON'T GET ME! STAND BACK!



PARALYZED WITH HORROR, I WATCHED AL BAXTER ABOUT TO ESCAPE, AS AN OLD WOMAN WHISPERED FIERCELY...

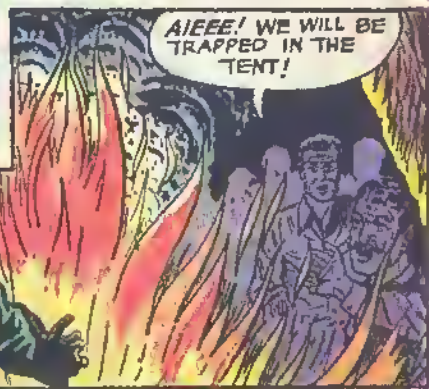
YOU'RE THE LAST OF THE MARKOVs, BOY! IT WILL BE UP TO YOU TO SEE THAT THE GYPSY VENGEANCE AND JUSTICE IS CARRIED OUT AGAINST THE MURDERER OF YOUR BROTHER!

MY-- MY BROTHER?
YES! YES! I PROMISE!



REACHING THE EXIT, MURDER MAD AL BAXTER TOSSED THE FLAMING TORCH ONTO A PILE OF OLD RAGS. THEY MUST HAVE BEEN OIL-SOAKED. INSTANTLY THEY FLARED INTO A MOUNTAIN OF FIRE!

AIEEEE! WE WILL BE TRAPPED IN THE TENT!



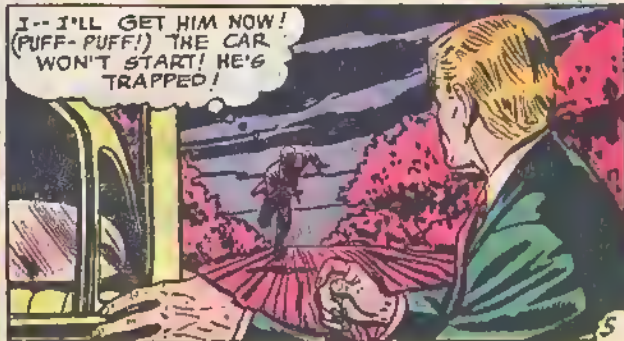
I CAN'T LET BAXTER GET AWAY! HE KILLED THE MAN WHO MUST BE MY BROTHER!



COME BACK, BAXTER! YOU'LL NEVER ESCAPE ME! STOP RUNNING! COME BACK!



I-- I'LL GET HIM NOW! (PUFF-PUFF!) THE CAR WON'T START! HE'S TRAPPED!

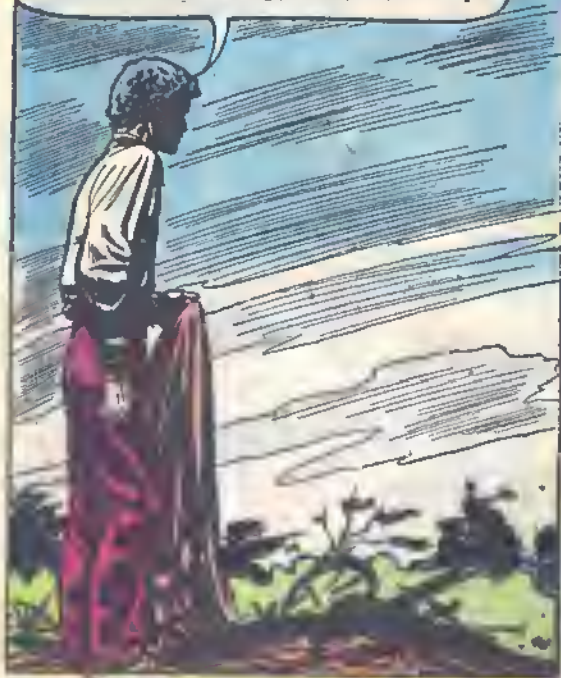


WAS WRONG! BAXTER'S CAR, BY SOME FREAK OF MECHANICS, NOW WORKED. AS IT SPED OFF DOWN THE ROAD, I TRIED TO RUN AFTER IT. I KEPT RUNNING, RUNNING, UNTIL MY LUNGS SEEMED TO BURST. I STAGGERED AND FELL, AND GREAT WAVES OF SICKENING BLACKNESS SWEEPED OVER ME...



WHEN I CAME TO, I STUMBLED DIZZILY BACK TO THE SITE OF THE GYPSY CAMP, ONLY TO FIND...

BURNED OUT! HARDLY A TRACE OF THE CAMP REMAINS! THE TENT FIRE MUST HAVE SPREAD AND DESTROYED EVERYTHING!



THEN MY FOOT KICKED AGAINST A METAL OBJECT IN THE CHARRED GRASS. I BENT AND PICKED UP AN OLD-FASHIONED WEDDING RING. IT WAS INSCRIBED: "TO LIDA - FROM BORIS MARKOV - 1944"...

BUT THE WEDDING - AND THE MURDER - AND THE FIRE! IT HAPPENED JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO! BUT THIS RING IS DATED TEN YEARS AGO!



THE TROOPERS WERE KIND. THEY WERE GOING TO TAKE ME BACK TO THE ORPHANAGE, BUT WHEN I TOLD THEM THE THINGS I HAD SEEN THIS NIGHT, THEY LOOKED AT EACH OTHER STRANGELY...

ALL THE THINGS YOU DESCRIBED HAPPENED ALL RIGHT, KID! I REMEMBER THE CASE! ONLY TROUBLE IS, THEY HAPPENED TEN YEARS AGO, IN 1944!



THERE WAS A KID SAVED FROM THAT FIRE, THE ONLY SURVIVOR! MAYBE THAT WAS EDDIE, HERE! EVEN THOUGH HE WAS ONLY THREE OR FOUR YEARS OLD AT THE TIME, IT MIGHT HAVE MADE AN IMPRESSION ON HIS MIND!

IT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT, I TELL YOU!



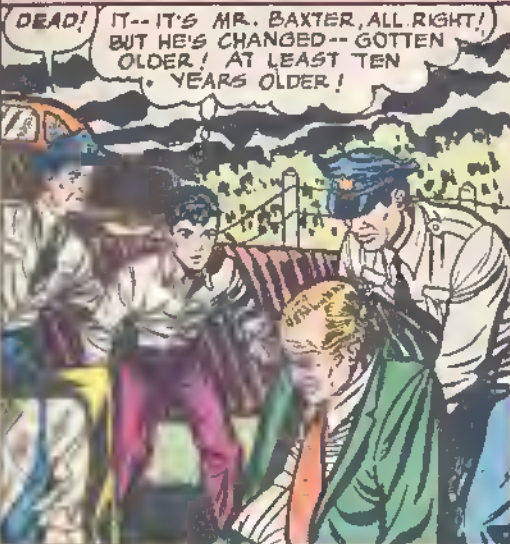
WHEN WE GOT INTO THEIR CAR AND STARTED BACK TOWARD HOME DALE, I STOPPED PROTESTING. THEN, SEVERAL MILES DOWN THE ROAD, WE SAW...



MR. BAXTER'S CAR!

MUST'VE SKIDDED INTO THAT POLE! SMASHED TO PIECES!

WHEN WE STOPPED AT THE WRECK AND I WATCHED THEM PULL AL BAXTER'S LIMP, DEAD FIGURE FROM THE CAR, A STRANGE FEELING GREPT OVER ME. I FELT A SENSE OF GRIM SATISFACTION, AND RELIEF. IT SEEMED THAT I COULD HEAR THE OLD GYPSY WOMAN SAYING, "YOUR BROTHER'S DEATH IS AVENGED, BOY! YOU CAN LIVE IN PEACE NOW!"



DEAD! IT-- IT'S MR. BAXTER, ALL RIGHT! BUT HE'S CHANGED-- GOTTEN OLDER! AT LEAST TEN YEARS OLDER!

HEY! THERE'S A KID'S JACKET IN HERE! WONDER WHO IT BELONGS TO? MAYBE THE KID'S STORY WAS-- NO! IT COULDN'T BE!



I'D BETTER NOT TELL THEM IT IS MY JACKET! THEY'O ONLY THINK I WAS CRAZY!

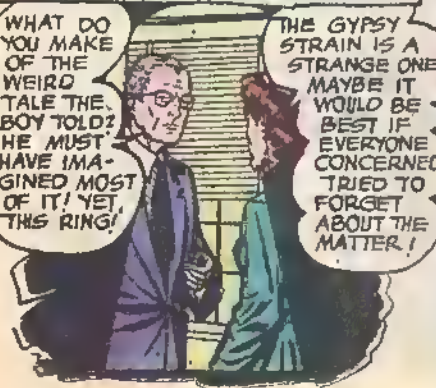
LATER, BACK AT THE ORPHANAGE...

SO THAT'S YOUR STORY, EDDIE? YOU CAN GO BACK TO YOUR DORMITORY NOW! IF YOU PROMISE NEVER TO RUN AWAY, YOU WON'T BE PUNISHED THIS TIME!

DON'T WORRY, SIR! I WON'T CAUSE ANY TROUBLE ANY MORE! I-- I'LL BE A CHANGED BOY FROM NOW ON!



OUTSIDE, I STOPPED AND LISTENED THROUGH THE KEYHOLE...



WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THE WEIRD TALE THE BOY TOLD? HE MUST HAVE IMAGINED MOST OF IT! YET, THIS RING!

THE GYPSY STRAIN IS A STRANGE ONE! MAYBE IT WOULD BE BEST IF EVERYONE CONCERNED TRIED TO FORGET ABOUT THE MATTER!



LATER THAT DAY, BACK WITH MY FRIENDS AGAIN, IN THE BRIGHT, CLEAN SUNLIGHT, IT WAS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT LAST NIGHT HADN'T BEEN JUST ANOTHER WILD DREAM. BUT I KNEW IT WASN'T. I KNEW, TOO, THAT IT DIDN'T MATTER MUCH. I FELT THAT FROM NOW ON, I WOULD NO LONGER BE WILD AND DIFFERENT. I WOULD BE JUST LIKE THE OTHER KIDS. AND FOR THAT, I WAS HAPPY!

The End

A Hand of FATE Mystery

#38

THE TRADING SHIP "PALAR" SET SAIL FROM BOMBAY, INDIA, WITH FULL CARGO IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY HEADED FOR PORT IN NEW YORK. CAPTAIN HOLLAND WAS OUT TO SET TIME RECORDS FOR THIS TRIP AND NO OBSTACLE WOULD STAND IN HIS WAY. BUT ABOARD SHIP AN INCIDENT THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A WEIRD ADVENTURE TOOK PLACE. FOUR DAYS OUT, THE CREW WAS THROWN INTO AN UNUSUAL STATE OF EXCITEMENT

CAPTAIN, THIS NATIVE IS DESPERATELY ILL. YOU WILL HAVE TO STOP AT CAPE TOWN AND GET HIM TO A HOSPITAL!

WE CAN'T! I HAVE A SCHEDULE TO KEEP! DO WHAT YOU CAN FOR HIM UNTIL WE REACH NEW YORK!

BUT THE DOCTOR'S CARE WAS NOT SUFFICIENT TO CURB THE NATIVE'S MALADY

I WARNED YOU, CAPTAIN, THIS MAN HAS THE BLACK PLAGUE! YOU MUST PUT INTO PORT OR WE'LL ALL COME DOWN WITH IT!

I CAN'T STOP NOW! THE DEVIL WITH HIM! I DON'T CARE IF HE DIES!

THE UNWILLING CREW WAS FORCED TO CARRY OUT THE CAPTAIN'S ORDERS AND THE NATIVE DIED AN AGONIZING DEATH

WHEN THE CAPTAIN REACHED NEW YORK, THE INCIDENT WAS REPORTED AND HE LOST HIS COMMISSION. HE RETIRED TO A SMALL NEW ENGLAND TOWN ON THE ATLANTIC COAST. ONE YEAR LATER AS HE STROLLED ON THE BEACH

HE COULD HAVE BEEN SAVED IF YOU HAD PUT INTO PORT IN TIME!

BAH! HE WAS A WORTHLESS NATIVE ANYHOW!

CAPTAIN HOLLAND... CAPTAIN HOLLAND...

WHA... A MAN IN THE BREAKERS CALLING ME. I'LL PULL HIM OUT!

IT'S THE NATIVE I THREW OVERBOARD! AAAH!!!

CAPTAIN HOLLAND DROPPED THE BODY AND FLED. HE BROUGHT A GROUP OF FISHERMEN BACK TO THE SCENE OF HIS TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE AND THEY CREMATED THE REMAINS OF THE DEAD NATIVE. BUT SEVERAL DAYS LATER, THE CAPTAIN WAS TAKEN BY A STRANGE ILLNESS. HE HAD BEEN STRUCK DOWN BY THE BLACK PLAGUE! HOW THIS ISOLATED DISEASE COULD BE CARRIED TO HIM BY ANOTHER VICTIM LONG DEAD, REMAINS A BAFFLING TALE OF REVENGE IN THE ANNALS OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

THE END

LOUIE BRINK, HOODLUM, DIDN'T BELIEVE IN WITCHES NOR IN THEIR CURSES--BUT HE WENT BEYOND THE BARRIERS OF THIS WORLD TO ESCAPE...

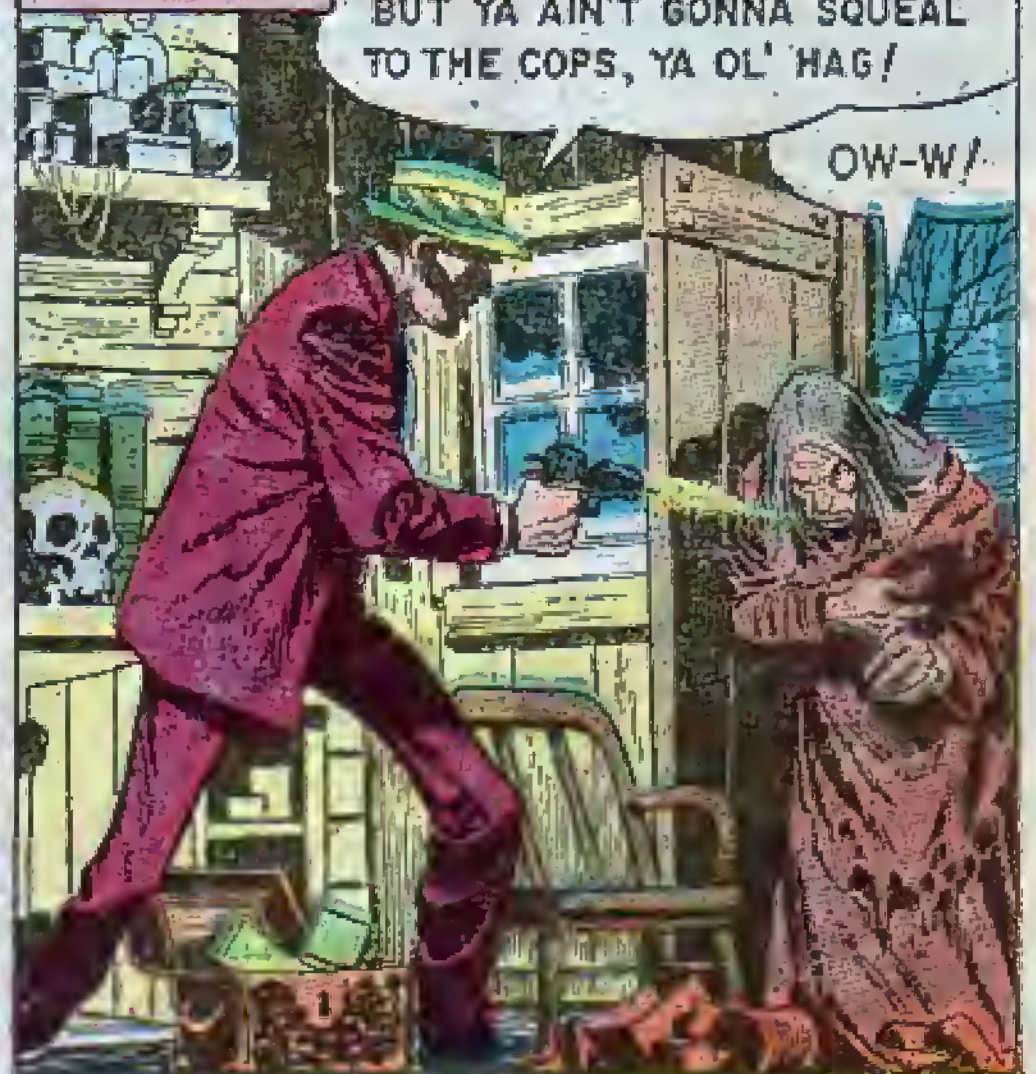
THE WITCH'S WICKED WORDS



GET THEM AWAY FROM ME, YA BLASTED WITCH! THIS ISN'T THE WAY YA SAID I WAS GONNA DIE! I DON'T WANNA BURN!

YOU WON'T, LOUIE BRINK! YOU'LL DIE THE WAY I CURSED YOU THAT NIGHT YOU KILLED ME!

THAT NIGHT WAS ONLY A FEW HOURS AGO-- BUT TO LOUIE BRINK IT SEEMED A THOUSAND YEARS PAST! HE HAD BROKEN INTO THE WITCH'S SHACK TO ROB HER--AND SHE CAUGHT HIM AT IT...



BUT YA AIN'T GONNA SQUEAL TO THE COPS, YA OL' HAG!

OW-W!

THE WITCH SAGGED TO THE FLOOR AND WITH HER FINAL CACKLE OF LIFE SHE BREATHED A CURSE UPON LOUIE BRINK...

Y-YOU WILL DIE THE WAY YOU LIVE, LOUIE BRINK-- BY THE GUN! THAT IS MY DYING CURSE UPON YOU, SCUM OF THE WORLD!

HA! YOUR CURSE IS AS PHONY AS YOU ARE, YA OLD HAG!



LOUIE LAUGHED AT THE WITCH'S CURSE--BUT HIS LAUGHTER DIED QUICKER THAN THE HAG HAD DIED--AND AS HE CAME OUT OF HER SHACK

CA-RIPE! BULLETS ZINGIN' OVER MY HEAD! IT'S THE COPS! THEY MUST'VE HEARD MY SHOTS!

NALT!



I BETTER SCRAM--AN' FAST--OR THAT BLASTED WITCH'S CURSE WILL COME TRUE!

OF COURSE IT WILL, LOUIE BRINK! YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM A CURSE! WHEREVER YOU GO YOU'LL DIE AS YOU LIVED--BY THE GUN!



THAT CRUMMY HAG IS HAUNTIN' ME--AN' THE COPS ARE STILL COMIN' WITH THEIR GUNS! MAYBE I CAN SHAKE THE SPOOK AN' THE BULLS BY TAKIN' A DIVE OFF THIS BRIDGE!



I'LL GO AFTER HIM, PETE! YOU GET TO A CALL BOX AND NOTIFY THE RIVER POLICE!

OKAY, MIKE! THAT HOOD DROPPED HIS HAT HERE AND HIS NAME'S INSIDE--LOUIE BRINK!



THAT CRAZY COPPER CAME IN AFTER ME--BUT HE'S SWIMMIN' RIGHT BY!



HA! I DAVE THEM THE SLIP! I MUST'VE BEEN NUTS TO WORRY ABOUT THAT WITCH'S CURSE COMIN' TRUE!

IT WILL COME TRUE, LOUIE BRINK! YOU CAN NOT ESCAPE IT! YOU'LL DIE THE WAY YOU LIVE... BY THE GUN!



LOUIE ESCAPED THE POLICE THAT NIGHT--BUT THERE WAS NO ESCAPE FROM THE GHOST OF THE MURDERED WITCH AS HE SNEAKED THRU THE DARK TOWARD THE GANG BOSS'S HIDEOUT...

SHUT UP, YA BLASTED HAG! I GOT AWAY FROM THE COPS--THAT PROVES I AIN'T GONNA DIE!

BY THE GUM, LOUIE BRINK... THAT'S THE WAY YOU WILL DIE!

HI, BOSS! I PULLED AN EXTRA JOB TONIGHT AN'...

...AN' YA GOT EVERY COP IN TOWN LOOKIN' FOR YA! THEY KNOW IT WAS YOU WHO KILLED THE WITCH --AN' THEY'VE ALREADY BEEN HERE!

YA CAN'T STAY HERE! GET OUT, YA TRIGGER-HAPPY JOKER OR...

MY PAL ROSCOE SAYS I'M STAYIN'!

BAM BAM

NAIL HIM, BOYS--HE RUBBED THE BOSS!

THE GANG! I--I DIDN'T KNOW YOU GUYS WERE IN THE BACK ROOM!

BUT YA AIN'T GETTIN' ME!

AFTER HIM! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY OVER THE ROOF TOPS!

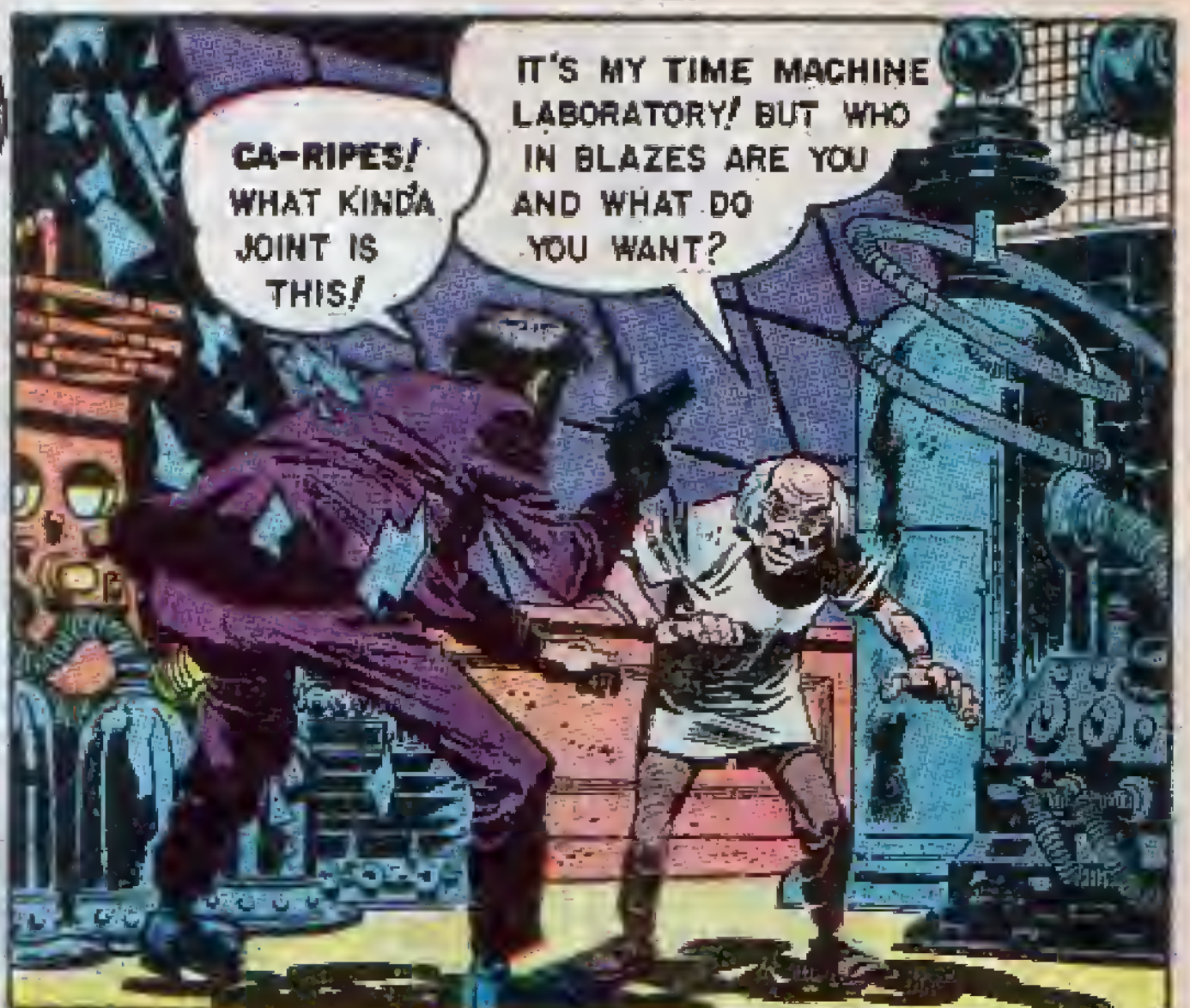
CRIPES! THAT BLASTED WITCH'S CURSE IS WORKIN'! THE WHOLE GANG IS AFTER MY HIDE -- WITH GUNS!

HOLY SMOKES! THERE'S NO PLACE TO RUN ANYMORE! I'M TRAPPED! IF I JUMP I'LL GET SPLATTERED AN' IF I-- I DON'T...

THEN YOU WILL DIE AS I SAID YOU WOULD, LOUIE BRINK... BY THE GUN!



I AIN'T GONNA DIE BY A GUN
OR ANY OTHER WAY, YA BLASTED
OL' HAG! THIS SKYLIGHT IS
MY WAY OUT!



CA-RIPES!
WHAT KINDA
JOINT IS
THIS!

IT'S MY TIME MACHINE
LABORATORY! BUT WHO
IN BLAZES ARE YOU
AND WHAT DO
YOU WANT?



I'LL ASK THE
QUESTIONS,
PROF! DOES
THAT TIME
MACHINE
GADGET WORK?

I DON'T KNOW!
I HAVEN'T TRIED IT
BECAUSE I HAVEN'T
BEEN ABLE TO GET
A VOLUNTEER TO GO
ON A TIME TRIP!



YA GOT ONE NOW!
BUT WORK FAST--
THERE'S A GANG
AFTER ME! WHAT
DO I DO FIRST?

STEP INSIDE!
I'LL SET THE
DIALS TO RECORD
WHAT TIME AND
PLACE YOU
LAND IN!



THERE HE IS--
INSIDE THAT
GADGET! LET
HIM HAVE IT!

NO! DON'T SHOOT!
THE TIME MACHINE
IS ON! IF ITS SEN-
SITIVE CONTROLS
ARE JARRED SOME-
THING DREADFUL
MAY HAPPEN!

THE GANG IGNORED THE PROFESSOR'S PLEAS
AND THEIR BULLETS CHOPPED INTO THE
TIME MACHINE! THEN, SUDDENLY THE
CONTRAPTION EXPLODED INTO A BRILLIANT
BALL OF ELECTRICITY...



AND WHEN THE BLINDING FLASH WAS OVER...

HOLY SMOKES!
LOUIE'S GONE!
BUT WHERE?

OUT INTO THE FRONTIER OF TIME! BUT
I CANNOT TELL WHERE-- BECAUSE
YOU'VE WRECKED THE DATA DIALS!



Nobody knew where Louie was--not even Louie! But he knew he wasn't dead because as he whirled thru the funnel of time he was still haunted by a thousand faces of the witch he had murdered...



Over and over again the voice of the old hag repeated the curse until Louie screamed in agony! Then he heard her no more--and he stopped spinning--but the sight he saw made him tremble...



THEY'RE ALL BLABBIN' IN SOME KIND OF FUNNY LINGO--AN' THEY'RE ALL DRESSED LIKE PEOPLE DID A LONG TIME AGO! MEBBY ONE OF 'EM CAN UNDERSTAND MY KIND'A TALK!



HEY, THERE! I'M A STRANGER HERE, PAL! WHAT PLACE IS THIS? AN' WHAT YEAR?



MEIN GOTT! INDEED YOU ARE A STRANGER TO GERMANY! AND YOUR GARB IS UNUSUAL--EVEN IN THESE MODERN DAYS OF 1450!

1450? WOW! I SURE TRAVELLED--AN' I SURE MADE A SUCKER OUTTA THE GANG AND THE WITCH'S SPOOK! HER CURSE CAN'T COME TRUE NOW--'CAUSE GUNS WEREN'T EVEN INVENTED IN 1450! HA!



MY CURSE WILL BE CARRIED OUT, LOUIE BRINK!! YOU WILL DIE--BY THE GUN!

THE GERMANY OF 1450 WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF ITS WITCH-MANIA AND THE CROWD WHICH HAD WATCHED ITS LATEST WITCH-BURNING BEGAN TO GATHER AROUND THE STRANGE ZOOF-SUNTED SIGHT NAMED LOUIE BRINK...

WHO ARE YOU AND WHERE DO YOU HAIL FROM? I HAVE BEEN TO MANY LANDS BUT NEVER HAVE I SEEN SUCH MANNER OF DRESS AS YOU WEAR!

I'M AN AMERICAN--FROM THE YEAR 1954! IT'S THE LAND AND AGE OF MIRACLES! THINGS LIKE JETS, DEEP-FREEZERS, AUTOS--THINGS YOU PEOPLE HAVE NEVER SEEN!

LIKE FOR INSTANCE THIS WRIST WATCH/ HERE, LISTEN TO IT.

MEIN GOTT/ THE THING IS BEWITCHED. IT BEATS LIKE A HUMAN HEART!



NAW, IT'S A GADGET. FOR TELLIN' TIME/ AN' THIS IS A CIGARETTE LIGHTER...

ODDSERVE! FIRE LEAPS UP FROM HIS FINGER-TIPS/



ONLY A WITCH HAS DUCH POWER!

JA/ HE IS A WITCH!



LET'S BURN THE WITCH AT THE STAKE!



SEIZE THE CURSED WITCH/ OH-W-W!

GET YOUR FAWS OFF'A ME, YA JERKS/ I AIN'T NO WITCH/ EVERYBODY IN 1954 HAS SEEN A WRISTWATCH AN' A LIGHTER!



BUT THAT WAS 1450--AND THE WITCH-HUNTING GERMANS HAD NEVER SEEN THE EVERYDAY GADGETS OF THE FUTURE. TO THEM IT WAS WITCHCRAFT--AND TO THEM, LOUIE WAS A WITCH...

BRING THE FADGOTS! WE SHALL BURN THE DEVIL'S SON AT THE STAKE WHEN WE CATCH HIM!

CA-RIPES! THE WHOLE BLASTED TOWN IS DUT TO MAKE A HUMAN TORCH OUT OF ME!





HOLY SMOKE/ THEY'RE
COMIN' FROM ALL
DIRECTIONS/ I'M
SURROUNDED--
TRAPPED!



YES, LOUIE
BRINK--THE
TIME FOR
YOU TO DIE
IS HERE!

BUT THIS AIN'T THE WAY YOUR
CURSE SAID I WAS GONNA GO/
HELP ME--DO SOMETHING/
I DON'T WANT TO BURN!



OF COURSE I'LL HELP
YOU, LOUIE BRINK/
LOOK INTO YOUR
BACK POCKET!

HUH? YEAH/ MY ROB/
I FORGOT ALL
ABOUT IT!



NOW I'LL SHOW YA
SOME REAL MAGIC,
YA WITCH--CRAZY
GOONS!

HE IS THE MOST HORRIBLE WITCH OF
ALL! NONE HAVE HAD THE POWERS
HE HAS! WE MUST SIEZE HIM!



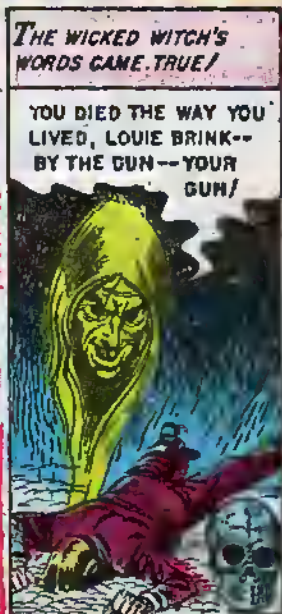
ONLY ONE BULLET LEFT--
AN' THEY'RE STILL COMIN'
TO BURN ME!



BUT THEY WON'T GET
ME! I'LL OUTFOX 'EM!



THE GUN BARREL WAS
COOL AGAINST LOUIE'S
THROBBING TEMPLE--
THEN SUDDENLY IT WAS
BLAZING HOT AS HE
PULLED THE TRIGGER...



THE WICKED WITCH'S
WORDS CAME TRUE!

YOU DIED THE WAY YOU
LIVED, LOUIE BRINK--
BY THE GUN--YOUR
GUN!

PACKAGE FROM A STRANGER

Fraken did not hear the door open. He was sitting in the rear of the store, his ears glued to the small radio his boss let him tune in at night. Outside, the rain pelted in a steady stream. No customer would come in tonight, Fraken thought, and planned to lock up early. His boss couldn't object to what he never knew, Fraken reasoned. And then he heard the man cough. He came to his feet slowly.

"Umbrella?" Fraken said, noting the droplets run down the man's turned-down hat and onto his raincoat.

The man shook his head. He was tall, Fraken saw; tall and lean and alert on his feet like a prizefighter poised for a blow. But his face—what showed under the turned-down brim—was obviously not that of a fighter. The nose was straight and thin; the ears had felt no damage from gloves; and no trace of scar tissue was evident. But something about the man made Fraken wary.

"A suitcase?" Fraken asked. "A portfolio? You wanta buy somebody a gift maybe?"

The man's face was immobile, but Fraken felt the eyes burn into him like a searchlight.

"Don't you wanta buy *anything*, mister?" Fraken said finally.

At last the man reached under his coat and took out a package covered with brown wrapping paper.

"I want to leave this here," he said. "I want to check it for a couple of days." Before Fraken could object, he set the package on the counter and a twenty-dollar bill showed in his hand. "It'll be worth twenty to you," he said, "and your boss doesn't have to know."

Fraken found himself nodding eagerly. His hand reached for the twenty.

"Not so fast," the man said. "Half now—and half when I pick it up...untouched."

With deft fingers he tore the twenty-dollar bill in two and handed Fraken half.

"Remember—the other half when I pick it up."

As silently as he had come in, he turned and padded out into the night. Fraken studied the package awhile, wondered what value lay in it. But any thought he may have had about opening it dwindled when he remembered the man's eyes. He hid the package, which was small and compact and only a little too large for a man's pocket, in the storeroom, behind a large rawhide suitcase. It was an easy twenty, he told himself.

But the next day Fraken wasn't so sure. As he read the item in the newspaper, his face blanched. On page one of the tabloid was a picture of the sharp-eyed man who'd left the package, and underneath in large letters the caption: "Thief-Killer Slain by Police Bullets."

The man had had a long police history, Fraken read, and wondered what value lay in the stolen package now in his possession. He had to wait for the radio news bulletin that night before he found out. By that time the fingerprints had been checked—and were found to tally with the prints left in the private office of the Curator of the Natural Museum. The stolen package contained a rare South American leaf, which when ground and burned, would—according to the legend quoted by the Curator—give the smoker a prevision of the future. He offered five hundred dollars for the return of the *byoto*, which the Museum had not yet subjected to tests.

"Another strange aspect of the case," continued the announcer, "is that in the dead man's pocket was found one-half of a twenty-dollar bill."

Now Fraken knew he had an easy five hundred. All he had to do was turn in the package and collect. But this was the simple, the obvious, the honest thing to do—and if Fraken had been honest up till now, it was not because he chose the side of the law; it was only because he had not seen the right opportunity. Now, he reasoned, if he could see into the future, anything might be his. This was the opportunity he'd waited for.

That night he locked the door to his furnished room, closed the window and pulled down the shade. When he was undressed and lying on the bed, he opened the package with trembling fingers. It was filled with brown leaves no different in appearance from ordinary tobacco leaves, but Fraken was filled with tremulous curiosity. Before he ground the tobacco and set them in a bowl, he took several swigs of whiskey the better to savor the moment.

At first, after he set fire to the incense, he was aware only of a sweet, heavy, fetid aroma—and smoke curling upward toward the ceiling. The closeness of the room, the cloying sweetness of the incense and the liquor all combined to make Fraken drowsy, but he forced his eyes to stay open.

And then he saw it. He sat up sharply, his eyes goggling. For what he saw was himself back in the store, but this time not an employee, not a

worker, but the owner. He laughed raggedly, knowing this could never happen.

"A fake," he muttered. "I should have turned it in for the five hundred. I haven't a chance in a million of ever owning that store."

It occurred to him then that maybe it wasn't too late to collect from the curator. "I can wrap up the package again," he thought, "and call him up in the morning. I'll get something out of it anyhow."

But when he got to the store the next morning, there was a crowd at the entrance and police inside. He decided it was no safe place for him and he started to turn away, but a little man grabbed him by the sleeve.

"This is him," the little man shouted. "This is Fraken."

Immediately the crowd pressed around them and Fraken saw there was no escape. He found himself being forced inside, fearfully facing policemen and a white-jacketed young fellow.

"We'll have to have an autopsy," the man in the white jacket said, "but there's no question his heart gave out on him. It's just an ordinary heart attack."

The little man said then to the policemen, "This is the lucky young man who worked for Mr. Mahaffey—the one named in the will. Mr. Mahaffey had no relatives, no heirs, and he left the store to Fraken. I drew up the will and I've been named executor and I'll stand surety till the will is probated."

Only then did Fraken, relaxed now, recall having seen the little man. He had visited Mr. Mahaffey a few times in the store, but Fraken had paid no attention to him. But now the store was his, after court formalities. Now the byoto had been proved to reveal the future. Now Fraken had a power in his hands that one man—the thief—had died for; and another man—Mr. Mahaffey—had died to fulfill its augury. The byoto was valuable now and he would kill, he decided, to retain it.

He did not know then how soon he would have to kill.

That night a man entered his store warily. "You're Fraken?" the man said, and showed him a badge. "We're tracing all places where a man might have left a package a few nights ago. We know he came this way and we also, know only three stores were open within two blocks at that hour. We figure he may have left it in your store when you weren't looking. We checked the other two stores and there's no sign of it. And we know he didn't throw it away."

"A package?" said Fraken. "What kind?"

The plainclothes man described it.

"Why, yes," said Fraken. "A man left such a package. Told me to hold it at my house. Said

he'd phone me before he'd pick it up. Said he was being followed by thieves."

The plainclothes man laughed. "He—the guy who left it—was a thief. A thief and killer. Shall we go pick it up now?"

Fraken said he just wanted to get his coat from the back room. But under the coat he hid a twelve-inch length of lead-pipe. He did not want the officer's body found anywhere near where he lived so he gave the wrong address. In a dark part of town, he raised his hand.

"Here," he said, and they both got out of the car.

"That house there," he said, and as the officer turned to look, Fraken's hand struck, and struck again. And then he took to his heels and ran...

He reached his room white-faced and panting. He hadn't counted on the officer tracing the byoto to him, but now the last link to the strange incense was cut. Now he was really free. Or was he?

He took a drink while he wondered. And then he took another... and another. He was feeling drowsy, woozy, but still frightened. And then he remembered the byoto. He would try it again. Now he'd find out if anybody else knew about his crime; he'd learn if he'd ever be caught.

By the time he closed the window and drew the curtain, he was quite drunk. He weaved around the room, the bottle in his hand, upending it, gurgling from it as he undressed. He ground the leaves in unsteady hands, lying on his bed, knowing that at any moment he'd pass out from the liquor. But first he'd force himself to burn the incense. Even bleary eyes, he knew, could see what the incense would form.

He dozed for a few minutes, then woke with a start. Shapes were beginning to form in the smoke. He gurgled happily; he'd only been out for minutes. He'd still see what was in store for him before he fell asleep. He looked, and then he laughed. Laughed long and heartily. For there in the smoke he saw himself, and another figure throttling him. The figure was the dead thief. So Fraken laughed. For drunk as he was, he knew that a dead man could do him no harm. Imagine being strangled by a dead man!

So, lying on the bed, the burning incense on the low table beside him, Fraken laughed, rolling and tossing with laughter. And his hands, swinging around in drunken glee, struck the incense bowl. He felt the flame singe his body, knew some of the ashes were settling on the mattress. But he couldn't move to strike the smoldering mattress. He couldn't stir at all...

Fraken did not burn to death. "Suffocation," the coroner said. "A burning mattress," he told the reporters, "can choke a man more thoroughly than any killer's hands. Fraken, being drunk, didn't have a chance."

When his NUMBERS' UP...

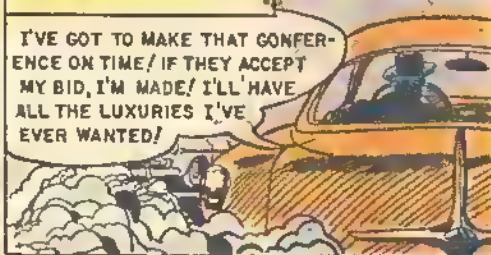
I'VE BEEN MIRACULOUSLY PRESERVED FROM DEATH! NOW I SHALL ACHIEVE MY AMBITION BECAUSE FATE HAS TAKEN A HAND! I CAN'T FAIL WITH FATE ON MY SIDE! NA HA!



IS THERE A MYSTERIOUS ELEMENT IN LIFE—AN UNSEEN POWER—THAT HOLDS SWAY OVER OUR DESTINIES...? AN INTANGIBLE FORCE THAT OVERRIDES THE PLANS WE LAY... THAT PREDETERMINES THE FINAL OUTCOME? THE ANCIENTS BELIEVED THIS AND PERHAPS THEY WERE RIGHT. CERTAINLY IT WOULD APPEAR SO FROM THE STORY OF GUYLE KRAFT, WHO SHOULD HAVE DIED MANY TIMES... YET WHO HAD HIS DESTRUCTION DEFERRED.

GUYLE KRAFT THOUGHT NEITHER OF FATE NOR OF DESTINY, THAT SEPTEMBER DAY IN 1933, AS HE RACED TO A CONFERENCE WHICH COULD NET HIM A MILLION...

I'VE GOT TO MAKE THAT CONFERENCE ON TIME! IF THEY ACCEPT MY BID, I'M MADE! I'LL HAVE ALL THE LUXURIES I'VE EVER WANTED!



THE CROSSROAD LIGHT TURNED YELLOW. LITTLE ERNIE REID WALKED INTO THE QUIET STREET WITH A PAPER UNDER HIS ARM FOR HIS OLDER BROTHER...

I GOT YOUR PAPER, BOB!

OKAY, ERNIE, HURRY OVER!



HIS LAUGHTER COMES TOO SOON. THE DAY OF RECKONING IS CLOSE AT HAND!



GUYLE DIDN'T SEE THE BOY DROP THE PAPER AND STOOD TO PICK IT UP. HE WAS TOO INTENT ON BEATING THE LIGHT...

HIS FOOT PRESSED DOWN ON THE ACCELERATOR. WHEN HE SAW ERNIE IT WAS TOO LATE TO BRAKE...

IT JUST TURNED YELLOW / IF I STEP ON IT, I CAN BEAT IT / THERE'S NO TRAFFIC ANYWHERE /

ERNIE... LOOK OUT /

THAT CRAZY KID / I CANT BRAKE NOW / IF I SWERVE I'LL TURN OVER... I CANT... /

SCREEEEEEE!

NO! NO! ...ERNE!

IT WASN'T MY FAULT / I COULDN'T STOP... THE KID OUGHT TO BE OFF THE STREET / MUSTN'T HALT NOW ... I MIGHT LOSE THE CONTRACT!

BUT IN THE WAKE OF GUYLE KRAFT'S FLIGHT...

ERNIE, ERNIE / TALK TO ME / ... YOU'RE NOT... NOOO, HE'S DEAD!

SHUFFED OUT / MERELY A SMALL OBSTACLE IN GUYLE KRAFT'S RUTHLESS PATH!

THE MURDERER! I HOPE HE NEVER HAS ANY HAPPINESS AND DIES SOON... VIOLENTLY, LIKE MY BROTHER!

HIS TIME SHALL COME SOON. IT IS RECORDED IN THE SCROLL OF FATE. GUYLE KRAFT SHALL MEET WITH VIOLENT DEATH!

GUYLE ENTERED THE CONFERENCE CHAMBER ON TIME, FLUSHED AND EXPECTANT

COME IN, MR. KRAFT! WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU!

I RUSHED HERE AS FAST AS I COULD, GENTLEMEN! I HAVE OUR BID WITH ME! I ASSURE YOU IT IS THE LOWEST ONE YOU CAN POSSIBLY GET!

MOMENTS LATER, AFTER PRESENTING HIS BID, HE COULDN'T BELIEVE HIS EARS. HE HAD THEM REPEAT THEIR ANSWER...

I SAID, MR. KRAFT, THAT WE'VE DECIDED TO LET ANOTHER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY BUILD OUR OFFICE BUILDING. THEIR BID WAS LOWER THAN YOURS.

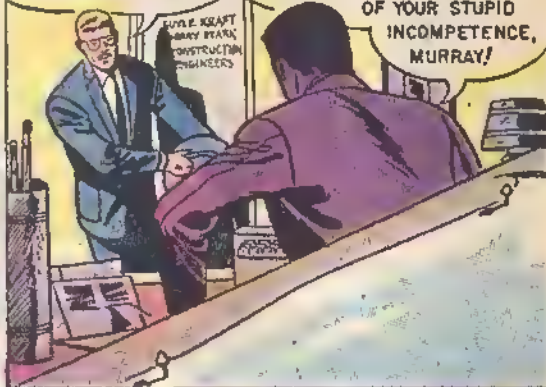
THAT'S WHAT I HEARD THE FIRST TIME! I WAS A FOOL TO HURRY LIKE I DID! AH, WELL, I HAVE OTHER IRONS IN THE FIRE!



THE NEXT MORNING, WHEN HE RETURNED TO HIS OFFICE...

HOW DID THAT DEAL WORK OUT LAST NIGHT, GUYLE? WAS THE BID RIGHT?

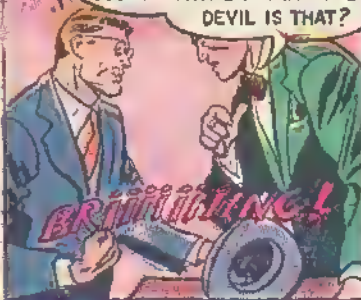
IT WAS A BUST! JUST LIKE EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER DONE! YOU'VE LOST US MORE THAN A MILLION DOLLARS BECAUSE OF YOUR STUPID INCOMPETENCE, MURRAY!



DON'T THROW ALL THE BLAME ON ME, GUYLE! YOU CHECKED THOSE FIGURES YOURSELF! DON'T FORGET THIS IS A WORKING PARTNERSHIP!

YEAH, WITH ME DOING MOST OF THE WORK!

HAVE YOU EVER CLINCHED A CONTRACT YOURSELF? FOR TWO CENTS I OUGHT TO... NOW WHAT THE DEVIL IS THAT?



HOSTILITIES BROKE OFF AS VIVIAN WALDEN, GUYLE'S FIANCEE, ENTERED.

I HEARD YOU TWO GOING AT IT RIGHT THROUGH THE DOOR! CAN'T YOU RUN A BUSINESS WITHOUT FIGHTING?

NOT WITH GUYLE WHO WANTS TO MAKE HIS FIRST MILLION BEFORE HE'S THIRTY! WELL IT'S NICE SEEING YOU, VIVIAN! MAYBE YOU CAN COOL OFF HIS HOT HEAD!



WHEN THEY WERE ALONE...

I THOUGHT I HAD THE DEAL CLINCHED THIS TIME AND EVERYTHING WE'D PLANNED WOULD BECOME A REALITY... BUT NOW...

WE'LL HAVE TO PUT OUR MARRIAGE OFF AGAIN... IS THAT IT?

WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE MYTHICAL BIG DEAL DEVELOPS IN SOME INDETERMINATE FUTURE!



VIVIAN'S REACTION WAS SWIFT AND ANGRY...

I'VE HAD ENOUGH! THREE YEARS I'VE WAITED UNTIL YOU COULD MAKE UP YOUR MIND! THIS ONLY PROVES YOU DON'T LOVE ME... I'M THROUGH!

VIVIAN, WAIT! LET ME EXPLAIN!

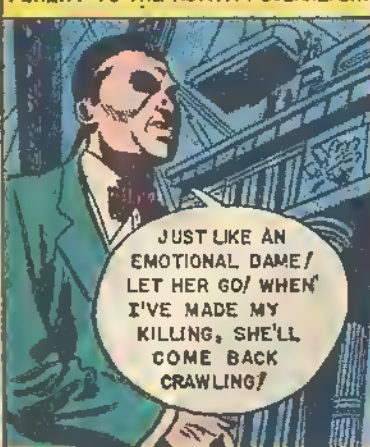


VIVIAN, YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU! I PROMISE IT WON'T TAKE MUCH LONGER... JUST GIVE ME A LITTLE MORE TIME!

YOU SAID THAT LAST YEAR AND THE YEAR BEFORE THAT! MAYBE THIS WILL BRING YOU TO YOUR SENSES! GOOD-BYE GUYLE!



STORMING, UNAWARE THAT AN UNSEEN FATE HOVERED NEARBY, GUYLE WALKED BACK TOWARD HIS OFFICE, INDIFFERENT TO THE ACTIVITY OVERHEAD...



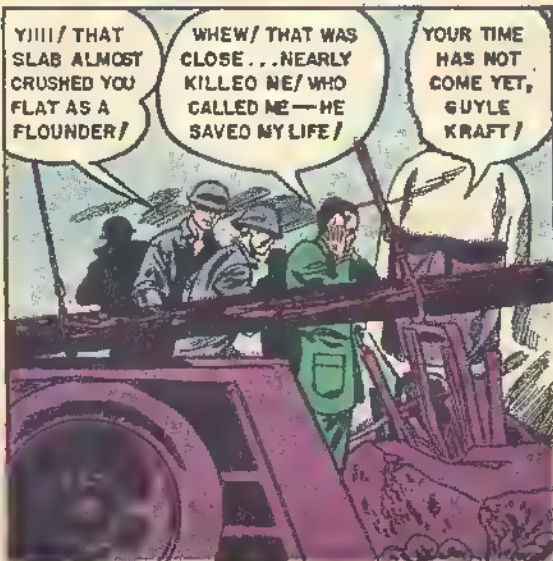
SUDDENLY A WEAK LINK IN THE HEAVY CHAIN SNAPPED...



DOWN IT SHOT LIKE A HUGE METEOR IN FLIGHT. THERE WASN'T THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE OF ESCAPE FOR GUYLE. BUT...



WITH AN EARTH-SHAKING CRASH THE MARBLE SLAB STRUCK, LANDING WHERE GUYLE HAD STOOD BEFORE HE HEARD THE VOICE.



SEVERAL WEEKS LATER, AT HIS OFFICE

WELL; YOU CAN START FURNISHING THAT PENTHOUSE YOU'VE BEEN DREAMING ABOUT. I JUST SIGNED THE CONTRACT FOR THAT OIL FIELD CONSTRUCTION JOB THAT'S BEEN KICKING AROUND FOR A YEAR!

MURRAY, YOU'RE A GENIUS! I'M SORRY I EVER ROASTED YOU! THIS IS THE BREAK I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR.



ON LOCATION, AT THE OIL FIELDS WHERE WORK WAS ALMOST COMPLETED.

C'MON UP AND TAKE A LOOK AT THE PROGRESS WE'VE MADE! WE'LL FINISH IN RECORD TIME! GUYLE, YOU SHOULDN'T BE SMOKING HERE! THERE'S HIGH OCTANE ALL AROUND!

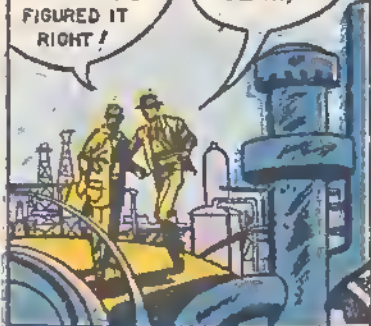
DON'T BE AN OLD WOMAN, MURRAY! I'M CAREFUL!

THIS IS MY CHANCE! A FALL INTO A STORAGE TANK WOULD FINISH HIM! OUR PARTNERSHIP WOULD BE DISSOLVED!



NICE, HUH? ESPECIALLY SINCE WE STAND TO NET TWO HUNDRED GRAND APIECE FROM THIS JOB? THIS TIME I FIGURED IT RIGHT!

YOU FIGURED IT WRONG AGAIN, MY FRIEND. WE'RE NOT GOING TO SHARE THE PROFITS! I'M TAKING ALL OF THEM AND YOU'RE GOING TO AN OILY DEATH!



THERE WAS NOTHING TO GRASP BUT THIN AIR AS MURRAY'S BODY, PROPELLED BY GUYLE, SHOT OUT INTO SPACE.

A
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SO LONG, MURRAY! I DON'T NEED YOU ANYMORE! AAAAHH, HE KNOCKED THE CIGARETTE OUT OF MY MOUTH!



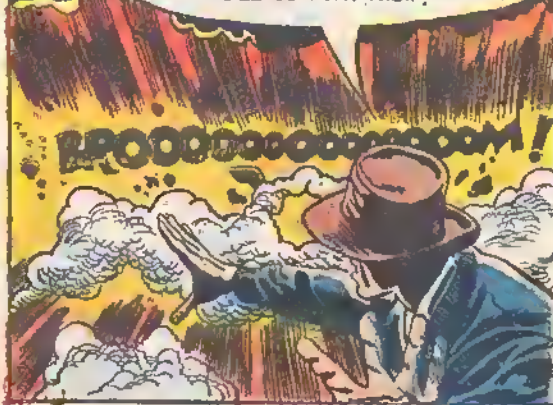
HE DESCENDED QUICKLY, SEARCHING EVERYWHERE FOR THE SMOLDERING CIGARETTE. WHILE MURRAY WAS DROWNING, UNHEARD, IN AN OIL TANK.

WHERE COULD IT HAVE FALLEN? THE WIND MIGHT HAVE CARRIED IT ANYWHERE! OH WELL, MAYBE IT WENT OUT BY ITSELF!



IT DIDN'T GO OUT AND IT WAS MUCH TOO LATE WHEN THE FIRST STORAGE TANK EXPLODED...

I'M SURROUNDED BY A SEA OF FLAMES! ALL THOSE TANKS ARE GOING TO EXPLODE AND I'LL GO WITH THEM!



THIS WOULD BE A PERFECT HELL FOR A MURDERER, BUT ACCORDING TO THE BOOK HIS TIME HAS NOT COME... NOT YET!

IT'S NO USE! WHICHEVER WAY I TURN... MORE FLAMES! NOTHING CAN SAVE ME NOW! I'LL BE ROASTED ALIVE!



AND LIKE ON A PAST OCCASION WHEN A MIRACLE WAS NEEDED TO SAVE HIM ... IT CAME...

WATER! HA HA! MY LUCK IS STILL HOLDING OUT! I'M RESCUED AGAIN! THIS TIME I THOUGHT I WAS IN THE DEVIL'S OWN INFERNO!



WHEN THE FIRE DIED DOWN...

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE ALL SEEN A GHOST/ SEE, I'M STILL ALIVE/ MY DESTINY MUST BE LINKED WITH THE STARS. UNFORTUNATELY, MY PARTNER'S WASN'T. HE WAS CAUGHT IN A BLAST BEFORE I COULD REACH HIM!

THOSE EXPLOSIONS BLEW UP A WATER MAIN! THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT SAVED YOU, MR. KRAFT!



YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FIRE/ I COULD SUE YOU FOR CRIMINAL NEGLIGENCE, BUT YOUR CONSTRUCTION WORK WILL JUST ABOUT COVER MY OIL LOSSES/ I'LL WRITE IT OFF THAT WAY!

THIS PUTS ME BACK WHERE I STARTED FROM/ BUT I WON'T LET IT STOP ME. I KNOW I'M NO ORDINARY PERSON. NOTHING CAN HARM ME!



THE EVENTS OF THE NEXT FEW MONTHS ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED GUYLE HE WAS INDESTRUCTIBLE.

THE CLIENT HE HAD TAKEN TO THE RACES WAS AWESTRUCK BY HIS NARROW ESCAPE...

THIS HAPPENS TO ME QUITE OFTEN! INSTINCT TOLD ME TO STAND FAST! IF WE HAD RUN AWAY WE WOULD BE DEAD!



ON ANOTHER OCCASION A MILLION-VOLT CABLE BROKE AND COILED AROUND HIM LIKE A SNAKE.

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, DON'T MOVE! IF THAT WIRE TOUCHES YOU, YOU'LL FRY!

DON'T WORRY, IT WON'T/ NOW WILL YOU HURRY AND TURN THE CURRENT OFF/ I CAN'T STAY HERE ALL DAY!



LATER, A FIFTY-FOOT DROP ONLY RESULTED IN SOME LACERATIONS AND A BROKEN ANKLE.

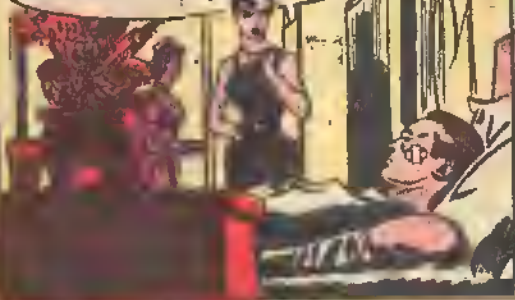
THE AWNING BROKE HIS FALL/ IT'S MIRACULOUS HOW HE SURVIVED!



WHILE HE LAY RECUPERATING IN A LOCAL HOSPITAL, GUYLE HAD AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

GUYLE, I COULDN'T STAY AWAY! I'VE HEARD OF ALL YOUR NARROW ESCAPES, BUT YOU WERE ALMOST KILLED IN THIS ONE! OH, GUYLE LET ME HELP YOU SO YOU WON'T HAVE TO PURSUE THIS MAD AMBITION OF TOURS ANYMORE!

THAT'S VERY NICE OF YOU, VIVIAN, BUT WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP ME?



MY FATHER IS HAVING A MILLION DOLLAR SCOUT CAMP RESORT BUILT IN THE ALLEGHENIES. I'VE PERSUADED HIM THAT YOU'RE THE MAN TO DO THE CONSTRUCTION WORK!

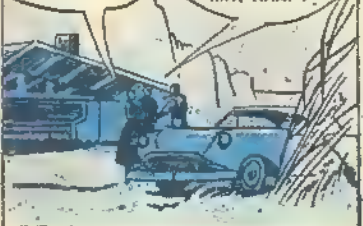
VIVIAN, DARLING! THAT'S WONDERFUL NEWS! WE WON'T HAVE TO WAIT ANYMORE... I PROMISE! I'LL BE OUT OF HERE IN A WEEK AND I'LL START ON THE PLANS RIGHT AWAY!



A WEEK LATER GUYLE NOSED HIS CAR UP THE HAIRPIN TURNS TO VIVIAN'S FATHER'S LODGE WHERE THE CONTRACT WAS TO BE SIGNED...

GUYLE, FATHER WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE PLANS YOU SENT! HE'S ALREADY DRAWN UP THE CONTRACT!

THAT'S RIGHT! AND AT THIS MOMENT I'VE GOT SOME SCOUT LEADERS WORKING UP THERE! COME INTO THE LODGE, MR. KRAFT!



FOUR HUNDRED FEET ABOVE THE LODGE, BOB REID WAS CLEARING GROUND FOR THE CAMPSITE...

WON'T THE TROOP BE CRAZY ABOUT THIS PLACE WHEN WE HAVE IT ALL CLEARED, FELLERS!

YES, BUT WATCH THAT TREE, BOB! IT'S BEGINNING TO SWAY DANGEROUSLY! I DON'T KNOW IF THE ROPES CAN HOLD IT!



BEFORE THE WORDS WERE OUT OF HIS MOUTH

LOOK OUT, BOB! IT'S BREAKING AWAY!

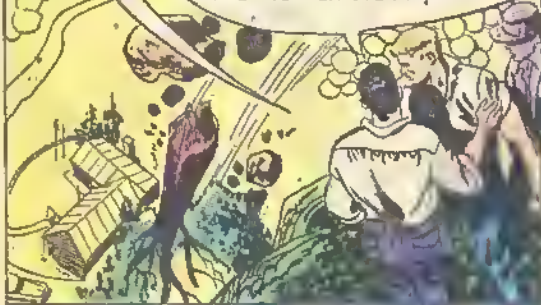
DUCK UNDER IT! GET AWAY FROM THE CLIFF!



WITH A THUNDEROUS ROAR THE MIGHTY TREE TOPPLED OFF THE CLIFF, DRAGGING TONS OF DIRT AND STONES ON ITS WAY DOWN.

WHEW, THAT WAS A CLOSE CALL!

I'M GLAD FOR MORE REASONS THAN ONE THAT I ESCAPED! MY FOLKS WOULD NEVER SURVIVE THE SHOCK. A YEAR AGO MY KID BROTHER ERNIE WAS KILLED BY A HIT-AND-RUN DRIVER! THEY'VE NEVER GOTTEN OVER IT!



IN THE CABIN BELOW, THE CONTRACT WAS COMPLETED JUST AS THE FIRST DULL RUMBLE WAS HEARD...

IT'S A ROCKSLIDE! DON'T GO OUT THERE! WE'RE PERFECTLY SAFE IN HERE! WE'VE HAD THEM BEFORE!

NO, NO! SOMETHING TELLS ME I MUST LEAVE! IN THESE MATTERS I FOLLOW MY BASIC INSTINCTS! I'VE NEVER BEEN WRONG! BETTER COME WITH ME!



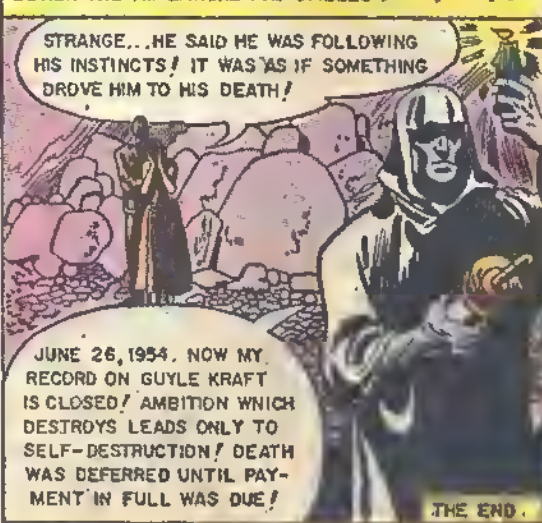
GUYLE JUST ABOUT REACHED THE CAR WHEN THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE AVALANCHE STRUCK...

SO BE IT! WE HAVE COME FULL CIRCLE AND GUYLE KRAFT'S DESTINY HAS BEEN FULFILLED!



WHEN THE AVALANCHE WAS STILLED.

STRANGE... HE SAID HE WAS FOLLOWING HIS INSTINCTS! IT WAS AS IF SOMETHING DROVE HIM TO HIS DEATH!



JUNE 26, 1954. NOW MY RECORD ON GUYLE KRAFT IS CLOSED! AMBITION WHICH DESTROYS LEADS ONLY TO SELF-DESTRUCTION! DEATH WAS DEFERRED UNTIL PAYMENT IN FULL WAS DUE!

THE END.

Get Rid of UGLY PIMPLES this new easy way!

Amazing new medicated lotion developed by a doctor works wonders by clearing up skin blemishes in one week or less!

DON'T let a bad complexion ruin romance, spoil your fun, cause you to be embarrassed, shy or ashamed. If you suffer from acne, the common external cause of pimples among young people, try this wonderfully effective medicated lotion that was developed by a practicing physician to clear up his own teen ager's complexion after other methods had failed. It has produced astonishing results for many thousands of others. It is **GUARANTEED** to help you or it won't cost you a single cent!

Doesn't Show On Your Face

Keraplex is a skin-colored lotion (NOT a greasy salve or ointment!) that is quickly absorbed by the skin and gets right down in the pores where its healing and antiseptic ingredients can go to work. After you have applied it, there is no trace left on the surface. In fact, it makes a perfect powder base... actually improves the tone of the skin! It is pleasant and easy to use—leaving your skin soft, clean and fragrant.

Works in SIX Out of SEVEN Cases!

An analysis of **RESULTS** taken from actual case histories proves that Keraplex is successful in clearing up six of every seven cases of externally caused blackheads, pimples and other common blemishes. It is also very effective in the treatment of *eczema*. It tones up the complexion generally, giving it a healthy, radiant glow.

Try This New Method Without Risking A Penny!

Keraplex is **GUARANTEED** to clear up your skin troubles or there will be **NO COST** to you whatsoever. If yours happens to be the **ONE** extra-stubborn case out of seven which Keraplex cannot help in one short week, it will cost you nothing to have tried it. Keraplex is sent to you with that simple, positive **GUARANTEE!**

SEND NO MONEY

You need send no money with the coupon below. When postman delivers your Keraplex lotion (in plain wrapper marked "Personal"), deposit with him only the modest price indicated below, plus a few cents postage. Then use your Keraplex morning and night for a full week, following the simple directions which will be enclosed.

If you do not **SEE RESULTS** that delight you—if you are not fully convinced that Keraplex **IS** clearing up your complexion—just return the empty bottle or unused portion and the purchase price will be refunded in full. Don't delay a single day. The longer you let your skin troubles go, the more difficult it will be to clear them up and get your complexion back to a healthy, clear, unblemished condition! Clip and mail the coupon **TODAY**. Underwood Laboratories, Inc., Stratford, Conn.



BEFORE

This young man suffered from a severe case of acne for years and tried all the usual "remedies" without success.



AFTER

Same young man after using **KERAPLEX** twice a day for just one week. Notice the decided improvement—pimples completely gone!



BEFORE

Note more than a dozen blemishes on just one side of this girl's face before **KERAPLEX** was applied.



AFTER

Same girl had used **KERAPLEX** twice a day for only 5 days when above photo was taken. Note the amazing improvement.

WHAT USERS SAY:

"I was suffering from a severe case of acne... and with only 4 days' treatment with Keraplex... was completely relieved."—P. S.

"I have been completely satisfied with your lotion to help clear up the pimples on my face."—K. W.

—K. W.

"I have been using Keraplex for a severe case of *eczema* on my hands, knees and elbows. Now my skin is completely clear."—A. M. B.

MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

UNDERWOOD LABORATORIES, Inc., Dept. 6 STRATFORD, CONN.

Yes! I want to try Keraplex **ON APPROVAL**. Send size checked below in plain wrapper marked "personal." When it is delivered I will deposit with postman amount indicated below, plus postage. If not delighted with the **RESULTS**, I will return empty bottle within seven days for a full refund of the purchase price.

☐ Regular Size, \$1.98

☐ Double Quantity (Two Bottles), \$3.39

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

☐ **SAVE POSTAGE.** Check here if you **ENCLOSE** payment, in which case we pay postage. Same money-back Guarantee applies!

Payment must be sent with all orders to be shipped to A.P.O.'s, Canada and foreign countries.

Amazing New Way ^{TO} A Slimmer Figure

REDUCE ^{WITH} DELICIOUS CANDY ^{KELPIDINE} PLAN!

**"WE GUARANTEE YOU
WILL LOSE UP TO
5 POUNDS IN 5 DAYS*
10 POUNDS IN 10 DAYS*
15 POUNDS IN 15 DAYS*
25 POUNDS IN 25 DAYS*
AND KEEP IT OFF".****

*How Fast You Lose Weight Depends Upon How Quickly You Order and How Much You Are Overweight

**You Will Always Want to Keep on Eating Kelpidine Candy—and Keep on the Plan—It KEEPS Weight Off!

**THIS CANDY MUST
TASTE AS GOOD AS
OR BETTER THAN
YOUR FAVORITE
CANDY OR YOUR
MONEY BACK!**

Now at last science has discovered a new delightfully thrilling way to take off fat—to lose up to 25 lbs. safely! The secret is that Kelpidine Candy satisfies your craving for high calorie foodstuffs. It keeps you from overeating—the reason most doctors give for being fat! It's the best aid to will power, cuts your craving for food!

**NO DANGEROUS DRUGS!
NO HARSH DIETS!**

Here is thrilling news for fat folks! You can lose up to 25 lbs. in 25 days by simply nibbling on tasty appetite satisfying candy, whenever you are tempted to overeat.

**YOUR MONEY BACK IF YOU
DON'T REDUCE TO THE
WEIGHT THAT MOST
BECOMES YOU!**

Thousands of people were amazed to find that this delicious candy plan actually takes off weight—without dangerous drugs, starvation diet, or hard-to-follow methods. Here's one way to reduce that you will want to continue with to keep off fat! The Kelpidine Candy Plan helps you curb your appetite for fattening foods, helps keep you from overeating. Now you reach for a delicious sweet candy instead of fattening foods—it kills the overpowering urge to overeat—in eat between meal-snacks. Your craving for rich, fattening foods is satisfied with this candy plan. Almost like magic you begin to enjoy this plan for reducing.

**SENSATIONAL TWO-WAY
GUARANTEE!**

This sweet delicious Kelpidine Candy plan is guaranteed (1) to

take off up to 10 pounds of excess weight in 10 days. (2) to taste better or as good as your favorite candy and to be the best plan you ever followed or you get your money back.

**SCIENTIFICALLY AND
CLINICALLY TESTED!**

That amazing ingredient in Kelpidine candy is the most remarkable discovery for fat people ever made. It's been tested by doctors in test-alter-test. The results were far better than doctors ever hoped for! The results were reported in medical journals throughout the world! Doctors are invited to write for details.

**HERE'S HOW TO REDUCE
AND STAY SLIM!**

Most people are fat because of overeating—too much high calorie fattening foods—to your amazement you will want to keep on eating this delicious candy even after you have reduced to the weight that most becomes you and you'll keep your weight off that way!

**AMAZING DISCOVERY
OF SCIENCE!**

The Kelpidine Candy Plan is the result of scientific research for years for a new discovery for something that will stop your craving for fattening food and also satisfy your appetite. This delicious candy does not turn into ugly fat, it gives you the same feeling of fullness you have after you have eaten a satisfying meal. It kills your desire to overeat—it kills your craving for bedtime snacks and for in-between meal snacks. It's so safe even a child

**IT'S UNHEALTHY
TO BE FAT!**

Insurance companies and doctors tell everyone that too much fat shortens your life! Fat people die years sooner than people with normal weight! So be safe! Be fair to yourself! Start taking off ugly fat with delicious tasting Kelpidine Candy plan!

can take it without bad effects. With Kelpidine Candy all you lose is its deliciousness—you can't tell the difference!

**KELPIDINE CANDY IS
DIFFERENT!**

The amazing clinical tested and proven reducing substance contained in Kelpidine Candy is prescribed by many doctors—Don't be misled by imitation products—Kelpidine Candy is the result of scientific research and is the last word in Reducing.

**DON'T CUT OUT FOODS! CUT
DOWN ON CALORIES!**

You never starve, you always feel full with Kelpidine Candy plan—You'll never suffer hunger pangs—Your desire for high calorie fattening foods is always satisfied! With Kelpidine Candy Plan you eat the same quantity of foods—you merely cut down on the high calorie rich foods with the help of Kelpidine Candy. You eat as much as you want, your calorie intake will be less—That's the delightful amazing thing!

**YOU GET A LIBERAL
SUPPLY OF CANDY!**

Try the liberal supply of Kelpidine Candy Plan on our 10-day no risk offer. Keep a record of your weight—if you are not pleased with your loss of weight; if you can taste any difference between this candy and your favorite candy—return for refund! Just fill out coupon and mail to AMERICAN HEALTHAIDS CO., DEPT. K-68, Candy Division, 318 Market St., Newark, New Jersey.

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

You must be entirely satisfied with your loss of weight—This candy must taste as good as or better than your favorite candy—You must get rid of dangerous excess fat or your money will be refunded—Don't delay—You have nothing to lose but excess weight so mail coupon below now!



THIS CAN HAPPEN TO YOU!

WITH THIS DELICIOUS REDUCING CANDY PLAN!

Let this delicious candy plan help you control your desire for fattening food! Let it help you put a stop to the habit of overeating—A habit that's so hard to break! Kelpidine candy contains that new discovery many doctors prescribe to help curb your desire to overeat (the main cause of overweight).

**\$1.00
TRIAL
SAMPLE
SIZE!**

CUT OUT AND MAIL—NO RISK COUPON NOW!

**AMERICAN HEALTHAIDS COMPANY, Dept. K-68
Candy Division,
318 Market Street, Newark, New Jersey**

☐ I enclose \$1.00, send trial sample size, postage pre-paid!

☐ Rush a Liberal Supply of Kelpidine Candy plan. I enclose \$3.00, send postage pre-paid. (I save up to 75c postage by sending payment with order.)

☐ Rush a Large Economy Supply of Kelpidine Candy. I enclose \$5.00, send postage pre-paid. (I save up to 90c postage by sending payment with order.)

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY STATE Sent on Approval